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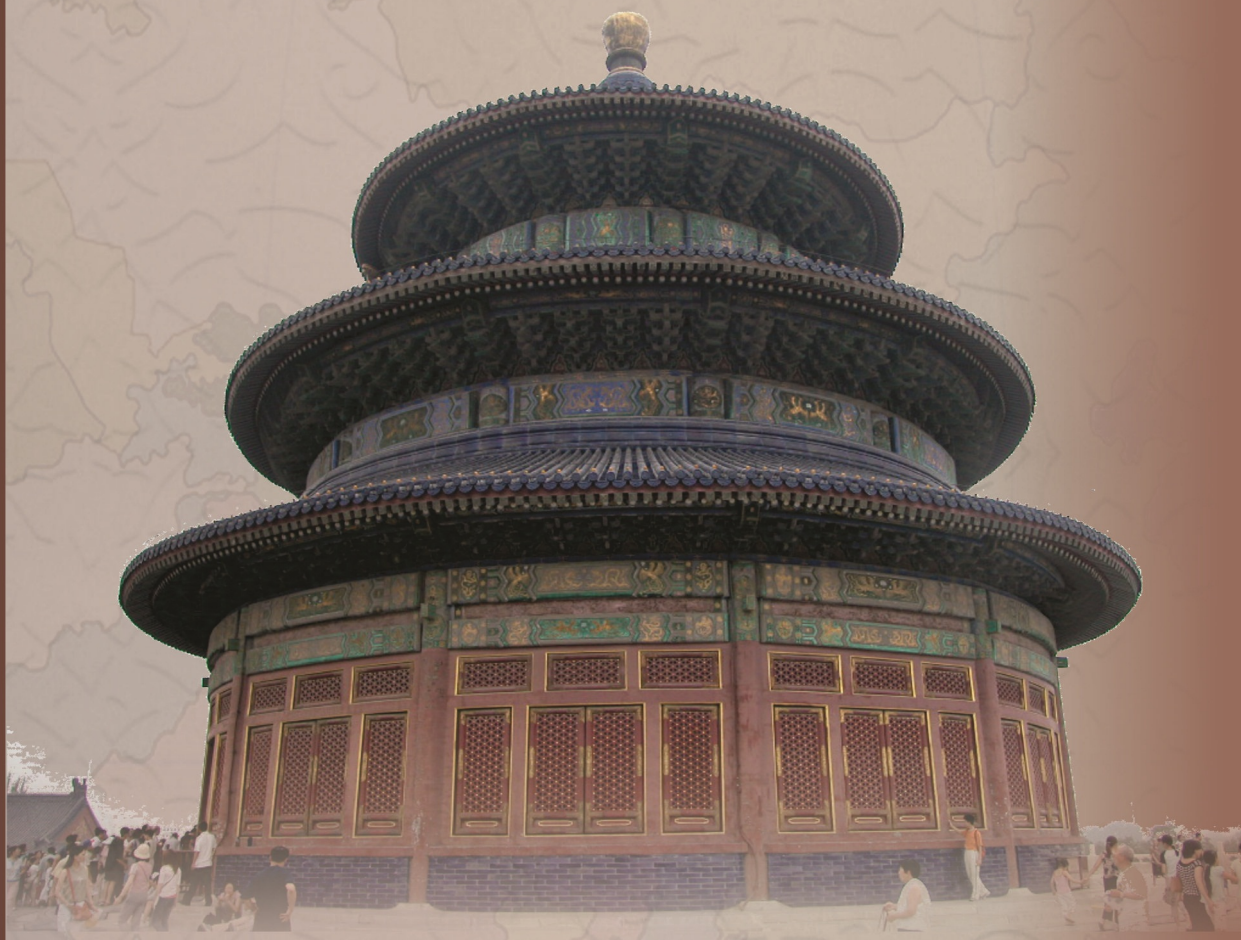

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NEW LABOR AND IMMIGRATION LAWS IN RUSSIA AND THEIR IMPACTS ON CENTRAL ASIAN IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Adam Saud[*] & Irfan Hussain Qaisrani[**]

Abstract

Russia is the second largest destination for immigrant workers after USA in the world. A vast majority, almost one third of this migrant labor force, comes from Central Asian states particularly Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Millions of workers from these countries contribute substantially to their national economies. A series of new labor and immigration laws introduced by Russian Federation has toughened the workers economic and social conditions. Immigrant workers have to face discrimination by Russian society as well as authorities. Police, after execution of new laws, routinely check 'Asian' immigrant workers and extort money from them. The new laws have forced many of the workers to leave Russia either to their home countries or to new destinations especially Kazakhstan and Turkey.

This article tries to explore the reasons for labor migration from Central Asian states to Russia and the treatment they get from both Russian authorities and society. The major focus is on series of new laws implemented by Russia. The research is primarily exploratory, descriptive and analytical in nature.

Keywords: Labor Migration, Russia, Central Asia, New Labor Laws, Harsh Working Conditions, Hate Crimes.

Introduction

Central Asians substantially contributes to global immigrant workers, especially in Russia. The local poor economic conditions along

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with fewer employment opportunities and meagre wages at home are the major reasons for this immigration. Being the ex-colonial master and having close geographical proximity along with basic understanding of Russian language has made Russia an attractive destination for Central Asian labor migrants. More importantly, visa free regime for many of its ex-colonies also makes it easier for the immigrant workers to go to Russia. It is estimated that around four million immigrant workers enter Russia annually, out of which, majority comprises of Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyzs,[1] and other parts of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).[2] The Central Asian workers are one third of the total immigrant workers in Russia.[3]Along with this external migration, there is also inland migration within Russia, primarily from North Caucasus, to Moscow and St. Pietersburg.

Central Asian region is well connected with Russia through a network of roads, railway lines, and air routes. Visa free regime for Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan also expedite this migration. Similarly, Russian had been a lingua franca within the region; therefore, many people can speak and understand this language. Furthermore, Central Asian diaspora and the relatives of immigrant workers in Russia also encourage labor migration from Central Asia to Russia. The local Russian labor force is shrinking rapidly and it is expected that by year 2020 this shortage will reach up to 10 million. To fill this gap, migrant labor force is direly needed there. Immigrant workers from Central Asia also contribute to the national economies. Besides raising the living standard back in their homes, they send a huge amount of remittances. The World Bank estimates round 52% of Tajik GDP and 31% of Kyrgyz GDP comes from the remittances especially from Russia. Similarly, around 20 percent of Uzbek population works as immigrant workers.[4]Such favorable conditions make Russia a good choice for immigrant workers from Central Asian region. According to data for 2015, "there were 616,000 residence permit holders from Kyrgyzstan; 138,000 from Uzbekistan; 100,000 from Tajikistan, and 85,000 from Kazakhstan"[5]in Russia.

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[1] Maria Lipman and YuliaFlorinskaya, "Labour Migration in Russia," *Ponars Eurasia.org*, (January 9, 2019). URL: http://www.ponarseurasia.org/point-counter/article/labor-migration-russia

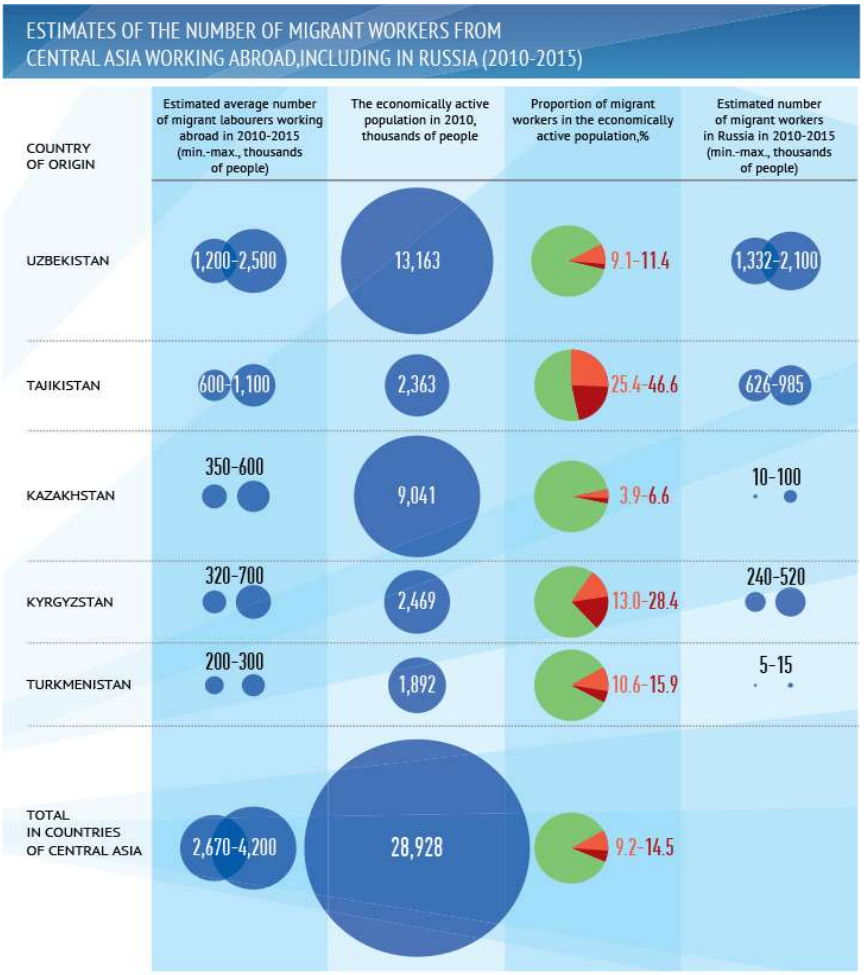
[2] An organization for the ex-Soviet Republics established in 1992.

[3] "Labour Migration, Remittances, and Human Development in Central Asia," *Eurasian Development Bank*, (2015), 8

[4] "Labour Migration in Central Asia," *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*, (July 4, 2016). URL: https://www.osce.org/magazine/250386

[5] Arne Seifert, "The Problems of Central Asia Migration to Russia," (January 12, 2018). URL: -https://doc-research.org/2018/01/the-problems-of-central-asian-migration-to-russia/

Image 1: Number of Migrant Workers in Russia (2011-2015)


ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF MIGRANT WORKERS FROM CENTRAL ASIA WORKING ABROAD,INCLUDING IN RUSSIA (2010-2015)
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
Estimated average number of migrant labourers working abroad in 2010-2015 (min.-max., thousands of people)
The economically active population in 2010, thousands of people
Proportion of migrant workers in the economically active population,%
Estimated number of migrant workers in Russia in 2010-2015 (min.-max., thousands of people)
UZBEKISTAN
1,200–2,500
13,163
9.1–11.4
1,332–2,100
TAJIKISTAN
600–1,100
2,363
25.4–46.6
626–985
KAZAKHSTAN
350–600
9,041
3.9–6.6
10–100
KYRGYZSTAN
320–700
2,469
13.0–28.4
240–520
TURKMENISTAN
200–300
1,892
10.6–15.9
5–15
TOTAL IN COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA
2,670–4,200
28,928
9.2–14.5
Sources: Картирование неурегулированной миграции в Центральной Азии 2011. – Астана: Международная организация по миграции, 2015. – С. 25; Двадцать лет Содружеству Независимых Государств 1991-2010: Статистический сборник. - М.: Статкомитет СНГ, 2011. - С. 30; Картирование неурегулированной миграции в Центральной Азии 2011. – Астана: Международная организация по миграции, 2015. – С. 25.

Source: https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Labour-Migration-from-Central-Asia-to-Russia-in-the-Context-of-the-Economic-Crisis-18334

The most occupied field by the immigrant workers in Russia is construction industry. Other areas of engagement include retail and services, domestic servants, salesmen and saleswomen, cleaning, loading, jobs at restaurants, and communal services. One of the reasons for immigration policy by Russia is demographic imbalance in population of Russia and Central Asia. Population growth rate in Russia is extremely low while in Central Asia it is

stable, making a surplus pool of labor force in the later which is accommodated in the labor deficit markets of the former.

In order to regulate the affairs of migrant workers, the Russian authorities have been introducing new laws for immigrant workers time to time. However, the series of new laws introduced since 2011 have made the life and working conditions of labor force extremely tough and miserable. There has been a steady decline in the numbers of immigrant workers during the recent years. Furthermore, harsh treatment by Russian police under new laws has forced many workers either to leave for their homes or forced them to stay at their living places, thus cutting off their networking with the local population. Russian media also portrays the 'Asian' workers as evil. This negative propaganda by media has created further problems for the immigrant workers. They are mistreated, hated, and sometimes, face violence by the Russian citizens.

After the introduction of new laws in 2017, under which each of the migrant worker has to pass a Russian language test, provision of residential address, paying taxes, and so on, migrant workers are treated harshly not only by police but also by their employers and landlords because later have to pay taxes now. There have been many cases of forced labor and human trafficking; both men and women. Although, there is no discrimination of gender, women and children are most vulnerable whether they migrate or left behind. They have to suffer at the hands of their relatives who exploit them. Women have to face harassment especially where they work as domestic workers. In order to save money, they have to live with men in dormitories in pathetic conditions.

Working and Living conditions of Central Asian Migrant Workers

The harsh working conditions are major reason for immigrant workers' weak health conditions. They face psychological issues, social isolation, and use drugs as well. There have been isolated cases where few workers got involved into terrorism and joined Islamic State (IS) and went to Syria as well. However, majority of the migrant workers obey rules and regulations and are extra conscious in this regard to avoid any inconvenience or police interrogation. Hiring authorities do not stand by their words and give low wages than promised one to the workers. Their working hours are also different from the promised one. Furthermore, they are provided extremely worst places to live. According to Human Rights Watch, "almost 40% of the immigrant workers are in the highly unregulated construction field."[6] Most of the workers go there for seasonal work which spans from six

[6] *Are You Happy to Cheat on Us: Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Russia*, (Human Rights Watch, February 10, 2019). URL: https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/02/10/are-you-happy-cheat-us/exploitation-migrant-construction-workers-russia

to nine months. "Migrant workers are deceived on a regular basis. They're hired for construction work and promised a good wage and then left to fend for themselves once their employers disappear."[7]The employer take handsome amount from them before they are sent to Russia. However, once they reach their destination, they are forced to work in far flung and difficult areas. Most of the times their passports, work permits, and other relevant documents are withheld. Most of the time, they are not given any copy of legal document especially, their contract. Such conditions make them vulnerable to forced labor and many times they become illegal and are unable to contact police as well.

"Traditional fields of employment for migrants are: construction (38.2%), trade (22.5%), transportation (12.7%), communication (8.8 %), catering (7.8%), industry (5.9%), and medicine (2.9%)."[8]Besides these jobs, they also clean streets, work as security guards at different buildings and houses, work as laborer at roads construction, and babysitters. Most of the times they are not entitled to health insurance or are given less accessibility, their wages are far less than the prescribed wages, live in abandoned buildings or containers which are without sanitary facilities, and work for extra time with no money paid.

Image 2: A Worker at Construction Site

[7] Mathew Luxmoore, "Ruble Ripple: New Russian Laws Make Life Difficult for Immigrant Workers," *Al*-Jazeera, (February 27, 2015). URL: http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/2/27/new-russian-laws-make-life-difficult-for-migrant-workers.html

[8] Olga K. Vokova et al., "Pridnestrovian Migrant Workers in the Country of the Recipient: Quality of Life and Employment Features," *Journal of History, Culture, and Art Research*, 6(3), (June 2017): 1522-23, URL: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/60a2/79720bb7c6d6b71d99d2324f0b70590ce18c.pdf

According to reports, conditions become worst when its winters. They are not even provided with drinking water. While describing living conditions of one construction site, Leonid Ragozen says“ there's no shower, sink, or toilet—instead there's a row of blue portable outhouses, each half-filled with stalagmites of frozen excrement. In the morning, the men shiver over a fire cooking carrot gruel and melting ice from a nearby stream to drink. Most are poorly dressed for the 10 degree weather—one laborer emerges with nothing on his feet but wool socks and flip-flops."[9]Those who live in rented rooms, have to live in congestion. There are always 5 to 15 people in room according to its capacity which is not gender specific.

Image 3: Living Place

As discussed in the introductory section, migrant workers seldom interact with the local population due to different issues. This isolation has brought them closer to each other. Main points of interaction for the immigrant laborers are either Halal Cafes or Mosques. According to Rano Turaeva, "migrants in Russia live mainly isolated lives. There is little space, time or opportunity to interact with the host population in all but the most perfunctory transactions."[10] Differences of language, religion, culture,

[9]Leonid Ragozin, "*Russia Wants the Immigrants the World Does not*," (March 14, 2017) .URL: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-03-14/russia-s-alternative-universe-immigrants-welcome

[10]RanoTuraeva, "Imagined Mosques Communities in Russia: Central Asian Migrants in Moscow," *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol. 20(2), (2019): 135.

traditions, and so on have also contributed for this isolation. The migrants consider Russians 'ultramodern' while Russian consider Central Asian workers as 'Muslims' and not as Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Kyrgyz. They are regularly interrogated by police even when have all the legal documents. They are suspected as terrorist and extremists.

Police treat them harshly and extort money from them as well. They are locked up routinely besides beating and interrogation. In a police raid "migrants were forced to strip naked in freezing winter temperatures, their clothes then tossed onto a bonfire. More commonly, the police would confiscate cash or make the migrants their personal slaves."[11]Cultural differences are the major reason for anti-migrants sentiments among the Russian population. Russian migration policies fail to integrate and accommodate the country's millions of migrants.[12] "Russia for Russians and "White Power"[13]were the slogans of Russian protesters when an Azerbaijani immigrant worker killed a Russian citizen over a dispute. The immigrant workers are considered as "criminal and diseased" by Russian people.[14] An Uzbek immigrant worker, currently a private driver says that "the locals think we are second-class people, and it comes out in their everyday attitudes toward us. They call us Gooks' or 'monkeys' -- we have to tolerate every possible kind of insult."[15]

There have been increasing incidences where migrant workers are abandoned once they land in to Russia. The agents take money from them to get entry but run away after the workers are entered in Russia. According to Human Rights Watch, four men from a far flung area of Tajikistan paid the agents for jobs to be paid between $800-$1000 in Sochi. However, they were abandoned by the intermediaries 250 KMs away in a small village from their destination. They had no money to buy a ticket to go home. Their passports were then sold to a construction contractor who kept them in his custody for 85 days with no salary, less food, and filthy and abandoned

[11]Matthew Kupfer and Bradley Jardine, " For Russia's Labor Migrants: A Life on the Edge," *The Moscow Times*, (November 4, 2016). URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/11/04/for-labor-migrants-a-life-on-the-edge-a56018

[12]Rano Turaeva, "Imagined Mosques Communities in Russia: Central Asian Migrants in Moscow," *Asian Ethnicity*, 20(2), (2019): 135.

[13] Alexander Avilov, "Foreigners in Russia are Panicking Over New Migration Rules," *The Moscow Times*, (July 5, 2018). URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/07/05/foreigners-in-russia-are-panicking-over-new-migration-rules-a62130

[14] Eurasia on the Move: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Migration," *Voices on Central Asia*, (November 13, 2018). URL: https://voicesoncentralasia.org/eurasia-on-the-move-interdisciplinary-approaches-to-a-dynamic-migration-region/

[15] Arman Kaliyev, "Central Asian Migrant say they Suffer as Second Class Citizens in Russia," *Central Asia News*, (December 8, 2017). URL: http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2017/12/08/feature-01

barracks by Russian military to live. They, along with other such workers had to break large and hard rocks with obsolete equipment. They used to collect rain water for drinking. They were fortunate enough that an organization working for the rights of immigrants got knowledge of them and was able to get them out of the custody of that contractor.[16]

In most of the cases, workers continue their labor even without getting salary for months in a hope to receive the same by the end. They need to send that money to their families in their home countries. One of such case is of Azmat and his co-workers. They were sent to Moscow from Kyrgyzstan for a large construction work at a local university in Moscow. For three months, they were paid irregularly due to which many of the workers left that site while some others including Azmat continued to work in hope for delayed payments. Azmat had to work for three more months until he also decided to leave the job for non-payments. He left back to Kyrgyzstan. The contractor usurped US $42,220 of Azmat and his co-workers.[17]

There is a surge in hate against the Central Asian migrant workers in Russia. Xenophobia is very common against them. Uzbek taxi driver Sherzod Astanayev was stabbed into his forehead by a Russian passenger. The recent polls depict that majority of Russians want to restrict the entry of immigrant workers from Central Asia. However, Moscow cannot revert its policy to let the migrant workers to Russia due to cheap labor as well as odd jobs done by these workers.

New Labor Laws and the Life of Immigrant Workers

In 2018, new law was enforced under which a migrant worker has to register his actual residence address rather than the employer's office address. This situation is complex for the immigrant workers as their landlords do not get their tenets registered with authorities to avoid taxes. If they are caught, they pay fine or bribe police to settle down the issue.[18] The absence of written contract is another major issue for migrant workers. Some companies make fake permits in return of money for the immigrant workers in order to avoid police interrogations. However, such permits are not registered with the authorities. Thus, they are always vulnerable to

[16] "Are You Happy to Cheat on Us: Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Russia," *Human Rights Watch*, (February 10, 2019). URL: https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/02/10/are-you-happy-cheat-us/exploitation-migrant-construction-workers-russia

[17] "Are You Happy to Cheat on Us: Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Russia," *Human Rights Watch*, (February 10, 2019). URL: https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/02/10/are-you-happy-cheat-us/exploitation-migrant-construction-workers-russia

[18] Alexander Avilov, "Foreigners in Russia are Panicking over New Migration Rules," *The Moscow Times*, (July 5, 2018). URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/07/05/foreigners-in-russia-are-panicking-over-new-migration-rules-a62130

deportation or heavy fines. According to new laws, employer has to pay 50,000 Rubles per unregistered employee while immigrant worker has to pay 400,000 Rubles for fake or no registration.

The law also says that upon two infractions like smoking in prohibited areas, jaywalking, traffic violations, or non-registration of residence can ban one's re-entry into Russia.[19] Even the migrants are not aware of their offenses and got to know once they try to re-enter into Russia after spending some time in their own countries. A migration specialist at Manchester University, Madelene Reeves says that "it's a kind of deportation by stealth…There has been a real increase in the severity of how the law is being implemented, especially in terms of re-entry."[20]

Those migrant workers who have their own properties after living for decades have no clue how they would get themselves register as they do not have any landlords. One of such worker stated that "I, for example, don't know where to go, who to speak to or how to register myself in my own apartment, which I've owned for almost 20 years now."[21]Many experts believe that such laws are to control the illegal migrants from Central Asia as well as to increase national revenues.

Even if a worker has been there for several years and has not violated any rule, he/she is ineligible for long term residence permit. The new laws say that "migrants must now pass an exam proving a basic knowledge of the Russian language and the country's laws and history."[22] Other issues which migrant workers have to face are "significant delays in issuing work permits; early expiration of quotas for work permits; and other bureaucratic obstacles."[23]

Furthermore, declining oil prices in international markets and overall economic decline in Russia has forced the construction industry to slow down, resulting in the joblessness of about 20-25% of immigrant workers. A Tajik migrant women in Chelobityevo town says "almost

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[19] Maria Lipman and YuliaFlorinskaya, "Labour Migration in Russia,"

[20] Alexander Avilov, "Foreigners in Russia are Panicking over New Migration Rules," *The Moscow Times*, (July 5, 2018). URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/07/05/foreigners-in-russia-are-panicking-over-new-migration-rules-a62130

[21] Alexander Avilov, "Foreigners in Russia are Panicking over New Migration Rules," *The Moscow Times*, (July 5, 2018). URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/07/05/foreigners-in-russia-are-panicking-over-new-migration-rules-a62130

[22] Alexander Avilov, "Foreigners in Russia are Panicking over New Migration Rules," *The Moscow Times*, July 5, 2018. URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/07/05/foreigners-in-russia-are-panicking-over-new-migration-rules-a62130

[23] "Are You Happy to Cheat on Us: Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Russia," *Human Rights Watch*, (February 10, 2019). URL: https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/02/10/are-you-happy-cheat-us/exploitation-migrant-construction-workers-russia

everyone has gone home now that there's no more work."[24]Police interrogation is a routine now. They stop everyone and everywhere because of their Asian identity. "You are walking around always nervously thinking you could get stopped and if you don't have any money, the police will ask you to call some friends and [have them] bring money," one migrant from Central Asia says. "For [us] living in Moscow is no dream anymore; it's about working to send some money back home."[25]

According to Baktygul Bayalieyava, a 38 years of Kyrgyz migrant worker in Moscow, one day police stopped me and asked me to show my documents which I showed them. She states that "my documents were in order, but they obviously did not want to let me go…They pushed me into their car and drove me away somewhere ... and suggested that I pay them off. They let me go after I gave them 3,000 Rubles ($51). At that time, it was almost an entire week's pay for me."[26]Similarly, another migrant worker from Uzbekistan, Usmanov says that ""When I saw a patrol car, I usually ducked into the nearest [apartment] courtyard…They easily figure out their victims -- a Kyrgyz or an Uzbek. For them, we're a cash cow."[27]

Image 4: Police Interrogation

[24] Alexander Avilov, "Foreigners in Russia are Panicking Over New Migration Rules," *The Moscow Times*, (July 5, 2018). URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/07/05/foreigners-in-russia-are-panicking-over-new-migration-rules-a62130

[25] Nicholas Muller, Russia: New Migration Registration Rules Threaten the Tenuous Livelihood," *Eurasianet*, (July 17, 2018). URL: https://eurasianet.org/russia-new-migrant-registration-rules-threaten-tenuous-livelihoods

[26] Arman Kaliyev, "Future in Russia Dim: Say Central Asian Migrants," *Central Asia News*, (December 13, 2017). URL: http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2017/12/13/feature-02

[27] Arman Kaliyev, "Central Asian Migrants Describe Injustice, Racisim in Russia,". *Central Asia News*, (July 3, 2017). URL: http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2018/07/03/feature-01

Rise of terrorism and extremism are also reason for police interrogation. Involvement of migrant workers in terrorists and extremist activities make the Central Asians vulnerable to police interrogation. The authorities have also tightened rules and regulations for the migrant workers especially from Central Asia in this regard. Since, the 'Muslim' identity is attached to the Central Asian migrants; they have to obey the new laws. Moreover, "the collapse of the Soviet Union, the war in Syria, domestic terrorist attacks, public opinion, and political platforms all support and sustain the securitization of migration in Russia."[28]There are evidences where IS has recruited online few of the Central Asian migrant workers in Russia. They went to Syria to fight as well. According to Sergey Abashen, a leading political analyst on Central Asia, the number is very small. He says out "of the three million Central Asian migrants in Russia, *only* around 5000 have gone to Syria."[29]"Akbarjon Jalilov, a 22-year-old Russian citizen and ethnic Uzbek born in Kyrgyzstan, blew himself up in the St. Petersburg metro system on April 3, 2017, killing 14 people."[30] That incident also forced Russian authorities to re-think about their migration policies vis-s-vis Central Asia.

The 2015 labor laws forced the migrant workers from non-Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) countries to get registered and acquire work permit within one month of their entry to Russia. It also says that they must register themselves with tax system and give a Russian language exam. Such kind of retractions have been fatal for the Central Asian immigrants especially because around 1.2 million Tajik migrant workers out of total 7.5 million population work in Russia. They are a major source of Tajik economy as well. Similarly, a substantial number of Uzbek workers are in Russia. Both these states are not the member of EurAsEC.[31]Steady decline in Rubles value has also brought the living standard of the families of migrant workers down. Furthermore, all the legal formalities cost around $500, to get a work permit besides getting a passport along with biometric verification, medical tests, and Russian language certificate course, to a Tajik migrant worker.[32]The tax to get work permit was 1100-1200 Rubles per month in

[28] Eurasia on the Move: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Migration," *Voices on Central Asia*, November 13, 2018. URL: https://voicesoncentralasia.org/eurasia-on-the-move-interdisciplinary-approaches-to-a-dynamic-migration-region/

[29]Arne Seifert, "The Problems of Central Asia Migration to Russia," January 12, 2018. URL: -https://doc-research.org/2018/01/the-problems-of-central-asian-migration-to-russia/

[30] Arman Kaliyev, "Future in Russia Dim: Say Central Asian Migrants," *Central Asia News*, (December 13, 2017). URL: http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2017/12/13/feature-02

[31] Irina Umarova and Jamila Sujud, "Tajik Face new Obstacles to Work in Russia," *Radio Free Europe*, (January 23, 2015). URL: https://www.refworld.org/docid/54c89c2b4.html

[32] Irina Umarova and Jamila Sujud, "Tajik Face new Obstacles to Work in Russia," *Radio Free Europe*, (January 23, 2015). URL: https://www.refworld.org/docid/54c89c2b4.html

2010 which reached up to 4500 rubles in 2018.[33] migrant workers, whether employed or not , have to pay 16000-18000 Rubles at the time of entry into Russia.

One of the immigrant workers from Tajikistan says that with the introduction of new immigration and labor laws, things have been complicated for us. We need to get our place of residence registered with police which, in most cases, is not acceptable to our landlords because they do not want to pay taxes. What they have asked us is to pay 3000 Rubles extra every month. We are here to earn money in order to feed our families back at home. We bear all harsh conditions and hate in order to provide a better life for our dependents back at home but such kind of laws will reduce our incomes and our families will suffer subsequently.[34]Similarly, affordable places are overcrowded and the landowners avoid to rent those to the immigrant workers. Sometimes, in order to avoid police, immigrants have to get themselves registered with luxury apartments which cost them most of their monthly income.

Immigrant workers from Central Asia have to face discrimination "with respect to contractual status, level of wages, hours worked and occupational safety and health issues."[35]such discrimination has led to the immigrant workers limited access to health care, education opportunities for their children, and other social discriminations besides all times fear of deportation.

Valentina Chupik, a human rights activist from Moscow says that "the person (immigrant worker when detained) is put into a basement, a cubicle, a tiny cell, without any furniture, with vermin, without food or water or the chance to go to the bathroom…They take their phones away ... [and] ... hold them for days, so that the migrants want to ransom themselves."[36]

Positive side

Immigrant workers from Central Asia especially from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan contributes significantly to their national GDPs. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have been the top countries in the world during 2017 which were heavily dependent on remittances. According to the World Bank,

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[33] Maria Lipman and YuliaFlorinskaya, "Labour Migration in Russia,"

[34] Nicholas Muller, Russia: New Migration Registration Rules Threaten the Tenuous Livelihood," *Eurasianet*, (July 17, 2018). URL: https://eurasianet.org/russia-new-migrant-registration-rules-threaten-tenuous-livelihoods

[35] "Migrant Workers are Subject to High Migration Costs," *International Federation for Human Rights*. (June 8, 2017). URL: https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/migrant-workers-in-central-asia-are-subjected-to-high-migration-costs

[36] Arman Kaliyev, "Central Asian Migrants Describe Injustice, Racisim in Russia," *Central Asia News*, (July 3, 2017). URL: http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2018/07/03/feature-01

around 36.6% of Tajik GDP and 30% of Kyrgyz GDP relied upon remittances primarily coming from Russia.[37]Such a high dependence on remittances make Russia an attraction not only for the immigrant workers but for governments of these states as well. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have charted out state level policies to encourage immigration of labor force.
The immigrants living in Russia for several years have managed to bring their families along with; for jobs and education. Their children go to local schools and colleges. Moreover, there is a trend where migrants are marrying local Russian women. Furthermore, recent ban by the West on Russians have changed societal behavior towards immigrants substantially. Such developments have increased the chances of acceptability of immigrant workers as well as good living conditions for their children. These children, when grown up, will also merge in Russian society and will be more Russified than Central Asians.

Having diverse and modern knowledge and experience of the Russian model of developing, the migrant workers would eventually influence policy makers of their own states for future planning. It will also help the communities back at home to better understand the Russian culture and its acceptability. The social capital of the immigrant workers as well as Central Asian diaspora living in Russia needs to be utilized effectively. It can not only bring social transformation but the small and medium enterprises can get benefit and develop from their experiences. Their know how and skills will add upon into this development process.

In order to avoid police and hatred from the ethnic Russians and to heal themselves, "Muslim migrants fill [this] gap with alternative systems of belonging to a Muslim spaces of self-support, economic and other trust networks, alternative medical care, social and cultural spaces and moral support."[38]Such Muslim spaces are mosques network within Russia, especially Moscow. Many of the immigrant workers say that they were not only able to avoid hate crimes but were blessed to know about their religion and practices which, in their native areas, is known and practiced by elderly people only.

Many of the migrant workers from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan eye Kazakhstan as their potential destination because of better working conditions. Kazakhstan has the second highest GDP and per capita income after Russia in the whole CIS. Although, less in job opportunities than Russia, Kazakhstan is more acceptable to the Central Asian workers due to shared culture, history, language, and religion. Although, Kazakh population is far less than Russia, the potential investment in the hydrocarbon sector as well uranium and gold production along with

[37] Nicholas Muller, Russia: New Migration Registration Rules Threaten the Tenuous Livelihood," *Eurasianet*, (July 17, 2018). URL: https://eurasianet.org/russia-new-migrant-registration-rules-threaten-tenuous-livelihoods
[38]Rano Turaeva, "Imagined Mosques Communities in Russia" 135.

initiation of key routes under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China, have opened up new job opportunities in Kazakhstan. The whole scenario may contribute not only for the development of Kazakhstan but also for the whole Central Asia region.

Recommendations

Instead of spending their earnings in non-development sectors, especially construction and renovation of houses, the immigrant workers must invest into small and medium businesses in their home countries in order to generate economic opportunities.

Russian government must chart out comprehensive and migrant friendly policies which are not only helpful for the immigrant workers to work peacefully but would encourage them to integrate into the broader Russian society. It should be quick to redress their grievances and must punish those employers who cheat the immigrant labor.

Russian media must do sensible reporting in order to create a positive and friendly environment for the immigrant workers. Negative attitudes inculcate helplessness and rage among the workers, which sometimes had been transformed into extremism. So, in order to avoid such negative tendencies on the part of immigrant workers, it is necessary that Russian media plays its role positively.

The policy makers in Russia must focus on the demand of immigrant workers and hence, positive aspects of immigration must be considered while policy formulation.

Immigrant workers' home states must also own them and chart out strategies and policies to help the workers during their travel to and from and their stay in Russia. Since, immigrant workers contributes substantially in the national economies of Central Asian countries, these states must be at their front foot in order to protect and promote the interests of immigrant workers.

The governments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan must focus on good governance and economic development. They must be investing and encouraging small and medium enterprises in order to generate employment opportunities at home. This may limit the outflow of immigrant workers who face harsh conditions in Russia now.

The International Labor Organization and International Organization for Immigration must also intervene into the matter and must try to convince the Russian government to review its new immigration and labor laws. This may ease the working conditions for immigrant workers.

Conclusion

The research has shown us that Russia is in dire need for cheap labor for its construction sector primarily. Moreover, it also needs workers for low grade jobs which the Russian citizens are not interested to do.

Central Asian states are building their nations and face economic hardships. Therefore, millions of laborers migrate to Russia for jobs. The Central Asian state, especially Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan encourage labor migration to Russia because remittances sent by the workers have positive impacts on their national economies.

The Central Asian migrant workers have to face many difficulties especially after a series of new labor and immigration laws. They have to face mistreatment not only by employers but also from Russian authorities especially police which extort money from them. Many times, the workers do not report mistreatment because of the fear of deportation. Many times they are subject to forced labor. Despite their valuable share in the Russian economy, migrant workers are considered as criminals and in worst cases terrorists. Migrants from Central Asia face negative treatment and discriminatory attitude most of the times.

This maltreatment has forced many of the workers to take refuge into religious gatherings notably in mosques and Halal cafes. They socialize and share their experiences in such gathering because they are not welcomed into the mainstream Russian society. There are few organizations and individuals who are working for the rights of these workers but they are just few. The new immigration and labor laws have forced many of the Central Asian migrant workers to look towards alternative destinations out of which Kazakhstan and Turkey are at the top list.

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THE TROIKA'S (THE U.S, RUSSIA AND CHINA) COMPETITIVE PLANS OF INTEGRATION FOR CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract

The Central Asian hinterland had been the central point of the 19th century imperial rivalry between Russia and Britain. The importance of Central Asia remains the same, though the players and its dimensions have changed. Two aspects have increased the importance of Central Asia in global politics. First aspect is the geographical position of Central Asia, that the region is landlocked. Therefore, it requires developed overland connectivity routes to approach other states and markets. The second aspect is the abundance of gas and oil reserves in the area. The concept of control over integration is the soul of the current geostrategic situation of Central Asia. The three great powers such as China, Russia and USA are working on their integration plan to provide direction to the region and manipulate the region according to their desires and interests. The great powers try to increase their own influence and to deny it to others (competitors). The great powers struggle for control over the production and marketing of hydrocarbon resources, transit routes and their influence in the region. Competition and collaboration are manifest in the changing competition and competitive interests of the great powers. Beijing enjoys a favorable geographical position over the Washington and is close to the region. Beijing enjoys huge financial and economic leverage as compared to Moscow. China's initiative is providing outlets to Central Asian Republics (CARs) and consequently the region is rapidly coming under its influence.

Keywords: Central Asia, Integration plan, The New Silk Road Initiative, Russia's Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

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1. Introduction

In the age of globalization, Central Asian Republics played a new role in the world politics. During the nineteenth century, both Russian and British empires saw prize of the region. To their diplomatic and intelligence warfare was given the name of "Great Game". In twentieth century, the Central Asian region was considered as the backyard of Soviet Union and was ignored by the world powers. But today Central Asia is considered as the centre of economic integration and a home to the world's most dynamic economies during the last decades. It was the subject of 'Great Game' between Russian and British imperialists in the nineteenth century, but it was ignored in the twentieth century as a remote landlocked area, with little or no access to world events.[1]

In 1980s, China opened to the outside world, in early 1990s the Soviet Union disintegrated, the 9/11 accident followed by the Afghan and Iraq war have completely changed the entire region. Afghanistan, adjacent to Central Asia, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq geopolitics have gained attention of the world to curb the unstable arc from Central and South Asia to Middle East. Central Asia is at the heart of the Eurasian super-continent, which is the most important part of the modern world economy. Bordered with fast-growing economies such as Russia and China. Central Asia is the hub of intercontinental trade and play a role of transit route between Asia and Europe. In addition, it is the great source of mineral and energy resources and hosts well-educated population. Former Soviet Central Asian Republics have 60 million population. If Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Mongolia and Uyghur Xinjiang autonomous region of China to incorporate as the regular geographic frontiers of the present Central Asia, total population reaches 123 million.[2]

The competency of human and natural resources and its significant location quickly integrating Eurasian economic space has become a prize for which the great powers are competing. Beside the surrounding countries of Central Asia, the U.S. and Europe also had quite good interests in the region. But there interests diverge, such as the main focus is to access the energy resources such as gas and oil reserves of Central Asia and to control its transportation. Russia tries to maintain its transport monopoly in the region, which preferentially give them access to gas and oil of Central Asia to other parts of the world. The U.S. and Europe want to diversify energy routes towards west through Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan. China is empowering

[1] E. Ingram, Great Britain's Great Game: An Introduction. *The International History Review*, (1980): 160-171.

[2] Q. Fatima, & S. Zafar, New Great Game: Players, Interests, Strategies and Central Asia. *South Asian Studies*, (2014): 623-652.

itself by making infrastructure of pipeline towards the east. Pakistan and India want to diversify untapped natural resources towards the south.[3]

On the other hand, CARs have internal issues, compete with each other for water resources. As like Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic are upstream desire to develop reservoirs and dams for hydropower generation. During the Soviet period, the reservoirs were developed mainly to irrigate the cotton producing areas of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. On the other side, the downstream republics (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan) with limited resources of water favoring the status quo regarding water management. These republics want to ensure maximum use of water for their arable lands.[4]

Central Asian states have been reported to compete and co-ordinate for water and energy resources. But it is essential for the long term progress of the region to make institutional and infrastructural development to make pathway easier for trading and non-energy transport with the surrounding neighbours. Payoff potential with facilitation of trade and transport infrastructure is dramatic, halving the expenses and time to reach from major ports through sea to Central Asia. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) reported that the infrastructure development programs double the GDP of the region.[5] Again, different states compete for economic benefits and want to be the sole transit corridors for the landlocked region.

During the American invasion in Afghanistan, the great powers considered Central Asian region as a conflict zone of the world. While the number of Allied forces reduced in the region. The Russian, Chinese and American turned their attention to the financial potential of Central Asia. This transformation may help to integrate Central Asian Republics with the international world economy, but if it is not done properly, it can lead to destructive competition in the region among China, Russia and the U.S. These forces execute their integration plan for Central Asia, they must seek opportunities to collaborate with each other.[6]

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[3] Umbreen Javaid, & A. Rashid, Oil and Gas Potentials of Central Asian Republics and Relations with Pakistan. *South Asian Studies*, (2015): 127 – 148.

[4] M. Bizhanova, Can the Silk Road Revive Agriculture? Kazakhstan's Challenges in Attaining Economic Diversification. *Central Asia Program*, (2018): 51-66.

[5] A. Amighini, Towards a New Geography of Trade?. *China's Belt and Road: a Game Changer?*, (2017): 121-140.

[6] Shabir Ahmad Khan, & Saima Ashfaq Kayani, Pipeline Politics In Central Asia: Paradox Of Competitive/ Cooperative Relations Between The United States, Russia And China. *Central Asia Journal*, (2013):57-83.

The modern-day geo-strategic environment of Central Asia is mainly revolving around the idea of integration. The great powers including China, Russia and USA, each have a plan of integration for Central Asia as part of their grand strategies, so that they could rule the geostrategic location of the region and restrict the rivals from having access to this region. There are evidences of competition and cooperation among these major powers. Central Asian states are trying to assure regime security and their own interest by playing the powers off against each other in the region. China has a geographical advantage over the U.S, while China has enjoyed enormous financial and economic leverage compared to the Russia. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of the main projects of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is directly linked to the geostrategic location of Eurasia, as it would effectively and efficiently, integrates the landlocked Central Asia to Arabian Sea.[7]

Military basis, energy pipelines and trade corridors involving different continents are the basic areas where the major powers want to have an influence and control over. The U.S, China and Russia being the world major players are trying to give an orientation to the strategic development of the region that can benefit their own interests. Regional integration is dealt with a grand strategy which emphasis to access markets. However, in order to deny access to rivals, the conflict of interests arises as competing approaches regarding these strategies are planned.[8]

Being the old players in region, the Russians have been enjoying proximity of this geographical region along with their influence and historical correlation to the region. However, after the breakup of former Soviet Union, Russia has been facing economic challenges rendering it somewhat of lesser influence. Russian plan is that through Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) they will assimilate the whole region. The Russia being old player of the game and enjoy geographic proximity with historical influence and leverage. However after the disintegration of former Soviet Union, Russia faced financial problems and thus the Russian influence decreased in Central Asia.[9]

The Russia's plan is to consolidate Central Asian region through the EAEU. The China enjoying geographic proximity and financial growth as well as best suited for orientation and integration of Central Asia. The main vision of Chinese for empowering its economic status in the region is the BRI. The U.S plan was the New Silk Road initiative for the integration of

[7] Shabir Ahmad Khan, Contemporary geostrategic environment of Central Asia: the US, Russian and Chinese plans of integration. *Central Asia*, (2016): 1-22.
[8] P. Kurecic,. The New Great Game: Rivalry of Geostrategies and Geoeconomies in Central Asia. *Hrvatski Geografski Glasnik*, (2010): 21 – 48.
[9] J. Konings, Trade impacts of the Belt and Road Initiative. *Global Economics*, (2018): 1-12.

Central Asia. Therefore, the convergence and divergence of interests both have a price. The great powers have its own operational and declaratory plans. The major powers are in competition for implementing their operational policies.[10] The BRI will play a key role in the development and opening of the region. It is necessary to discuss Russia and U.S integration plans prior to BRI in order to have a clear picture for comparison and conclusions.[11]

1.1 USA'S Integration Plan: The New Silk Road Initiative

Central Asia rose as a strategic frontline for America after 9/11, as soon as the military operations had been initiated in Afghanistan. Keeping three main factors i.e. political, economic and security in view, they planned to connect Central Asia and South Asia through Afghanistan. This made Beijing and Moscow to believe that the US has been contended on establishing its impact on Central Asia as compared to its little influence on Afghanistan. Also, American president George Bush asked for freedom agenda reforms in the Middle East, apart from being involved with leadership of Central Asia. Central Asian and American leaders developed tension, when the old regimes were removed in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, and taken over by the leaders who were pro-west. The Tulip Revolution that toppled Askar Akayev, the President of Kyrgyzstan in 2005, sky-rocketed tensions in the region.[12]

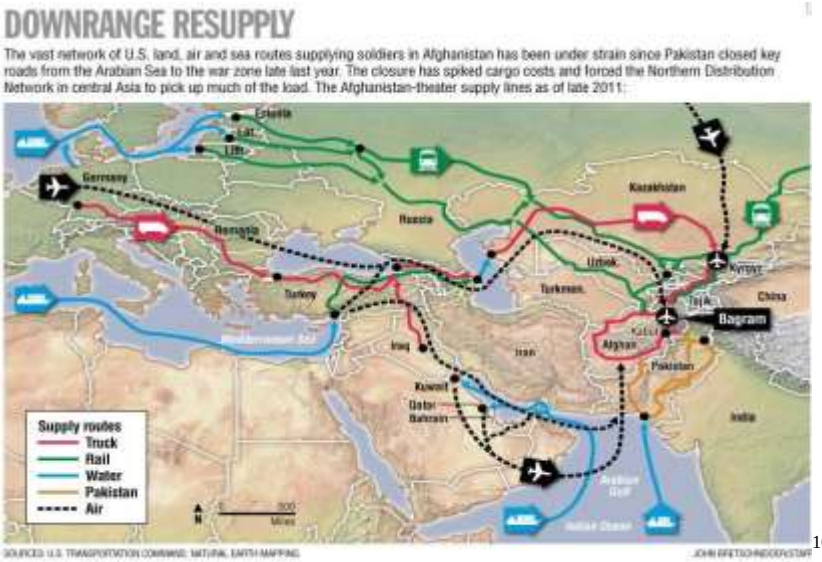
The cooperation between America and Central Asia re-surfaced again in 2008 after attack on US logistics southern line series by the Taliban through Pakistan. This was evident from the destruction of trucks, injuring security personnel in the attack of Peshawar logistic terminals by the Taliban in December 2008.[13] So instead of southern supply, the northern supply was made necessary after these attacks. Hence, the opening of NDN (Northern Distribution Network) was brought into effect by Americans with leaders of Central Asia to transport logistics to Afghanistan (Map 1). NDN covered an enormous area of Eurasia, distributing it into three routes. These agreements

[10] Shabir Ahmad Khan, Contemporary geostrategic environment of Central Asia: the US, Russian and Chinese plans of integration. *Central Asia*, (2016): 1-22.
[11] Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics.* (Haryana: Penguin Random House India, 2016)
[12] K. M. Butt, & M. M Elahi, *Inter-Regional Connectivity: South Asia and Central Asia*. Department of Political Science (pp. 1-310). (Lahore: GC University Lahore, 2016).
[13] Daily Dawn. (Peshawar: 2008, December 26). *Nato goods` terminals being shifted to Punjab*. Retrieved May 10, 2018, from https://www.dawn.com/news/971245

only comprised of transport of no return good from Afghanistan to Central Asia and also allowed only non-lethal supplies.[14]

Americans from the NDN route had got the idea of creating strength in commerce and trade across Eurasia. The material increases in capacity by NDN creates higher market demands in the surrounding region can be productive and cost efficient. NDN trend for America was considered as the highest US foreign policy to achieve, which can bring about hopeful solution for strategic problems of Afghanistan and nearby region. This program has been created to enhance the standard of the society by building highways, and making railways and electricity transmission easy. Germany along with America in 2011 conference 'New York Ministerial Conference' discussed issues and strategic programs that were objected to expand the New Silk Road.[15]

Map 1. Showing the Network of US Routes.



[16]

The U.S. Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, declared the commencement of New Silk Road in India, where they declared that the ancient route had to be revitalized.[17] ADB (Asian Development Bank) supported this initiative by

[14] Z. Shiriyev, NATO and the South Caucasus: The Impact of the Northern Distribution Network. *Latvian Institute of International Affairs*, (2013): 135-168.
[15] G. Lee, *The New Silk Road and the Northern Distribution Network: A Golden Road to Central Asian Trade Reform?* (New York: Open Society Foundations, 2012).
[16] NDN, Afghanistan 101, (2012, June 5). Retrieved 12 31, 2018, from http://afghanistan101.blogspot.com/2012/06/nato-to-move-war-supplies-through.html
[17] T. Maini, The 'New Silk Road': India's Pivotal Role, *Strategic Analysis, 36*(4), (2012): 651-656.

US through CAREC (Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation) program. Main theme of the program was to assist Afghanistan and link it to the region. Initiative plan's main motto was to integrate South Asia and Central Asia via Afghanistan so that the U.S in Afghanistan can benefit their invasion.[18] The initiation of New Silk Road has been deemed as one of the important routes to make exit strategies for Americans from Afghanistan. The U.S declaratory policy across border of the region has been to develop infrastructure for promoting international trade, giving space for the civil society groups, democratic groups and human rights, which will bring about economic cooperation and development in the region.[19] The civil society groups having the highest support from the state and policies involving the change of regimes has increased the gap between the U.S and Central Asian Republics (CARs). In the Geo-political space of post-Soviet CARs, two blocks have been challenging each other for the natural resources of Central Asia i.e. U.S and European Union (EU) versus Sino-Russian in the form of pipeline politics. Central Asia has been termed as the place of convergence of great powers by Zhao Hua-sheng, but the strategic distrust between the U.S and EU, and Russia and China has heightened the competition.[20]

Initially the U.S. operational policy had been to reduce the dependency of EU over Russian energy and to diversify the energy supply for EU bypassing Russian territory. Therefore, EU is linking with Central Asian and Caspian natural resources, to avoid Russian territory. Also, the U.S. did not back China and Iran for pipeline route and particularly Iran was not part of the New Silk Road initiative. The New Silk Road also have initiated two major projects of the regions that is the TAPI (Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India) gas pipeline and the CASA - 1000 (Central Asia and South Asia) 1000 electricity transmission projects supported by Asian Development Bank and World Bank.[21] Beside all the strategic steps, the issue of Pakistan and Afghanistan are still lies and the trust level with the U.S has been declined. Further as the program excludes important regional states like China and Iran, while the U.S financial competitors are making

[18] R. Standish, The United States' Silk Road to Nowhere. *Foreign Policy*. (2014, September 29). Retrieved June 27, 2018, from https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/29/the-united-states-silk-road-to-nowhere-2/

[19] M. Laruelle, The US Silk Road: geopolitical imaginary or the repackaging of strategic interests? *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, (2015): 360-375.

[20] Y. Kim, & Indeo, F, The new great game in Central Asia post 2014: The US "New Silk Road" strategy and Sino-Russian rivalry. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *46*(2), (2013): 275-286. Retrieved September 1, 2018, from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X13000147

[21] J. Boozman, *The New Silk Road Strategy: Implications For Economic Development In Central Asia.* (Washington: OSCE, 2015)

hurdles in implementing the project in the region. As Afghanistan is the main gateway for both the projects. As the problem remains the same, it seems as now the interest of American President towards the New Silk Road initiative has weaned off, and that's the reason why the U.S is drawing back from Afghanistan. Other than that, the U.S. is losing its power, as it does not have significant direct geographical connection with the region as compare to China and Russia.[22]

In China, the U.S initiative has been perceived with greater suspicion, and that the U.S policies have not been highly supported by the broader region like Beijing. The stalled projects presently in the region are considered as CASA 1000 and TAPI.[23] Similarly, China on the other side sees no benefit in coordinating its efforts with the U.S, as evident from the US-India collaboration to limit China. Another concern for China is that U.S. might also discourage the allies from becoming a part of the Chinese led development banks. The scholars believes that the U.S. 'geo-politicizes' New Silk Road initiative to not including main regional countries like China, Russia and Iran.[24]

1.2. Russia's Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

As the Cold war ended, the weak economic condition of Central Asian Republics and Russia resulted in declined GDP. The Central Asian republics had undergone privatization and economic reforms. At that time Russia faced transitional issues and financially very weak, to shape or device any effective policy towards the region. Also, the Russians were not expecting the rest of the world's strong ties with Central Asia. Russia started to balance the U.S by formulating different policies after Yeltsin's fantasies of equality was rejected by Washington. So Moscow saw China as the natural option for creating a multipolar world order. Similarly, Putin's first visit to foreign country was that of Central Asia in 2001 and made it as its focus of foreign policy after realizing the western physical presence led by U.S in Central Asia.[25]

Central Asia is considered as backyard and zone of influence by Russia. So, to integrate itself in the region through various bilateral and multilateral projects. Such as 'Union Treaty' signed in 2005 with Uzbekistan, the CU (Custom Union), the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization), the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) and the EAEU

[22] K. S. Stegen, Outcomes and strategies in the 'New Great Game': China and the Caspian states emerge as winners. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, (2015): 91-106.
[23] T. A. Bhat, & M. A. Kaw, Challenges of the New Silk Route Initiative (NSRI) for Afghanistan. *Sadf Working Paper*, (2018): 1-25
[24] Z. Shiriyev, NATO and the South Caucasus: The Impact of the Northern Distribution Network, *Latvian Institute of International Affairs*, (2013): 135-168
[25] A. I. Knobel, The Eurasian Economic Union: Development Prospects and Possible Obstacles. *Problems of Economic Transition*, (2017): 335-360

(Eurasian Economic Union). In 2000, the EEC (Eurasian Economic Community) was founded, that comprised of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia. All these countries were the descendants of Central Asian Economic Cooperation Organization. In 2010, the CU was announced (which was known as close regionalism), SCO in 2001 and in 2002 the CSTO was announced. In 2012, the Eurasian Economic Union was announced; the contemporary Russian integration plan for the region. On 1st January, 2015 the EAEU that included Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia and Russia replaced the Eurasian Economic Community (Map 2). Tajikistan joining the Eurasian economic union has yet to happen.[26]

Map 2. Showing Eurasian Economic Union Region.

(CCIS - Expertise)

Russia has designed the new international architecture, and calling it the macro-blocks or regional integration associations. The current foreign policy of Russia is focusing on Eurasianism and the advent of EAEU is tactically significant for Russia to effectively compete worldwide. As Russia itself considers to be a part of Eurasian civilization. Thus the Eurasian Union is not only economically important, it is also associated to Russia's identity. In the meantime Russia wants to use EAEU as one of the poles in the present world and desires to establish effective bond between Asia and Europe. EAEU scheme is the impression of Russia's prized territorial position; which

[26] E. Vinokurov, Eurasian Economic Union: Current state and preliminary results. *Russian Journal of Economics*, (2017): 54-70

is on vast areas of Europe and Asia. Which is mandatory for Russia, to be counted as a major global power. Most importantly, strong position in Central Asia will furnish the economic, political and strategic objectives of Russia in rest of Asia.[27]

Russia is resurgent after 9/11 in Eastern Europe, Middle East, Caspian and Central Asia. Pushing back international world order led by the U.S in different regions, particularly in Central Asia and Middle East. The Russian policy for Central Asia has proved to be multi-dimensional, as it includes efforts to access the energy resources of Central Asia, counter terrorism, works to build up a common economic space for labours, efforts for political stability and protection of ethnic Russians that are residing in Central Asia. Russia strives to develop a role of supremacy over the Central Asia. After the Russian-Georgian war in 2008, President Dmitry Medvedev stressed that Russia wanted to sustain a "privileged influence" in post-Soviet space.[28]

Similarly, the approach taken by the Russian policy to re-assert herself in Central Asia is a result of its interaction with other great powers of the world, like the U.S The Russia aim to secure top position in this newly growing multi-polar world. After 9/11, the Russia joined hands with U.S for empowering its position in Central Asia. However, with both countries having different objectives, the relation between Russia and the U.S turned increasingly competitive. Thus, in comparison to other great powers, the Russian - Central Asian relationship is profound and wide-spread. This relation is based on historical, infrastructural and Russian diaspora in Central Asia e.g., Railway network, ethnic Russians, pipelines and integrated defensive system. The Russian internal security services, intelligence services and defence forces have profoundly cooperated with Central Asian Republics, train them and to make economic ties in the field of industry and energy.[29]

The Russian after 9/11 sought to take over the role of mediator between Central Asian and the U.S, and expected an excellent deal. Although the fact was that it was one-sided. The General staff of Russia was cautious. It was believed by many Russians that the deep interest of the U.S in Central Asia were only for war in Afghanistan. At the initial stage Putin had agreed with it. But then in 2002, when the U.S deteriorated the Anti-

[27] G. Mostafa, & M. Mahmood, Eurasian Economic Union: Evolution, challenges and possible future directions. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, (2018): 163-172

[28] A. Konopelko, Eurasian Economic Union: a challenge for EU policy towards Kazakhstan. *Asia Europe Journal*, (2018): 1-17

[29] T. V. Kolpakova, & T. Kuchinskaya, China's "new regionalism" as a mechanism to strengthen the influence of china in the global integration processes: an example of eurasian economic union. *International journal of economics and financial issues*, (2015): 109-115

ballistic Missile treaty and withdrew from it, diverting its attention towards deployment of missile defense system in Europe, and the same year, seven new memberships from the Baltic states were included in the NATO. Russia objected to the admission of members from Soviet space into NATO. In 2001, the CIS (commonwealth of independent states) was almost dead at that point. With alarming speed, Putin, the President of Russia directly met with the heads of Central Asian Republics, and established a separate office in the Kremlin to closely inspect the contacts among inter-elites, as well as presented a new policy for handling the security issues of Russia and Central Asia.[30]

The U.S acted for promoting the regime change, while Russia acted as a protector of status-quo. The subject of 'international terrorism' opened doors for major powers to re-establishing strong relations with Central Asia. However the leadership of Central Asia was unwilling but as for cooperation against terrorism became the main issue for the region such as IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) in Kyrgyzstan. The CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) consist of Belarus, Armenia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan joined CSTO in 2006 after it fell out from K2 military bases with Washington. Russia in the region has re-established its military bases.[31]

Similarly, Moscow struggles in the decades of 2000 visualize the parallel effort of revolving around stable and sustainable economic and energy inroads through UES (Unified Energy System) and Gazprom into Central Asia. Throughout the decade, the trade of Russia with Central Asia in the beginning, the baseline was under 2 billion US dollars, which then in 2008 reach 27 billion US dollars, later on followed by the financial crisis. With the global financial crisis, Russia double its effort of influence over Central Asia through EAEU. The CSTO is modeled on NATO, while the EAEU as model of EU (European Union). Putin has shown interest in building a new "Eurasian Economic Union", similar to the EU.[32]

As for the situation that has been adopted after the dissolution of Soviet Union, Russia has been facing problem in trying to re-gain supremacy over the Central Asia. From early 1990s, the regional countries are having bilateral relations with the great powers of the world as well as with regional powers. Central Asia is known for having numerous options to

[30] S. Yılmaz, Eurasian Economic Union: a Regional Economic Hegemony Initiative. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, (2017): 1-15

[31] P. Kurecic, The New Great Game: Rivalry of Geostrategies and Geoeconomies in Central Asia. *Hrvatski Geografski Glasnik*, (2010): 21 – 48

[32] J. Konings, Trade impacts of the Belt and Road Initiative. *Global Economics*, (2018): 1-12.

develop pipelines as well as binding with multiple partners around the globe. The leadership of Central Asia is playing one power against the other and increasing their advantages. The majority of the Central Asian militaries were again participating in some shape with the U.S towards the end of 2010, in spite of the extending security ties with the SCO and CSTO. In addition, Moscow is also faced with problems like disputes among the Central Asian Republics such as water issue between Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.[33]

In Central Asia, the Russian leadership faced challenges, the real challenge is China as well as both are strategic partners. In the annual press conference of 2016, President Putin assured his commitment to Beijing. However China is so huge to be omitted. It is likewise a growing Great Power. Where its high pace of development has put a great concern for the U.S not only for Russia. The ideas emerging from Beijing are emphasized on peaceful rise and harmonious world. The Chinese reshaping the globe in a restraint manner is incredible. Such as China in Central Asia has achieved its geo-economic objectives with great clarity.[34]

1.3. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

In September 2013, Chinese President announced Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). BRI is the materialization of the aim of developing connectivity infrastructure on the basis of open regionalism, to connect and integrate the continental mass of Europe, Africa and Asia. The statistics show BRI project a promising one attracting the interest of more than 68 states of the world, comprising around 4.4 billion people. Which is 70% of the global population and holding 75 % of known energy reserves and generating a total of 55 % of global GNP.[35]

The following six corridors planned to be developed under the BRI include: China-Magnolia-Russia, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), New Eurasian land Bridge, China-Central Asia-West Asia, China-Indochina and China-Bangladesh-India- Myanmar. According to the Chinese minister of Foreign Affairs, there are three geo-economics and geo-political objectives of BRI i.e. developing the western interior and the frontier opening up to the world, through the development of connectivity infrastructure enhancing the status of Asia across the globe, forming a community of destiny for China's relationships with the regional states.

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[33] M. Fredholm, *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Eurasian Geopolitics: New Directions, Perspectives, and Challenges.* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2013)

[34] B. S. Sergi, Putin's and Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union: A hybrid half-economics and half-political "Janus Bifrons". *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, (2018): 1-10

[35] E. Cau, Geopolitical Implications ofthe Belt and Road Initiative: The Backbone for a New World Order? *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal*, (2018): 39-106

There are two components of BRI such as Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and 21st century Maritime Silk Road (MSR) (Map 3). The 21st century MSR is an extension of Eastern ports of China and via South China Sea-Strait of Malacca-Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf and up to Europe via Suez Canal.[36]

Map 3. Showing BRI, SREB, MSR routes.

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The SREB is overland connectivity route, connecting China by means of Kashgar through C.A to Europe through two corridor. The Northern Corridor and the Southern Corridor. The Northern Corridor begins from Beijing goes through northern Xinjiang-Kazakhstan-Russia up to Finland and Netherland. The Central Corridor goes to Europe (Paris) passing through its originating point in central Xinjiang via Tashkent-Tehran. The Southern Corridor pass by southern Xinjiang i.e. Kashgar Special Economic Zone (SEZ) crossing through Gwadar and moving onwards to Persian Gulf and

[36] A. Korybko, *CPEC and the 21st century convergence of civilizations*, (2017, January 21). Retrieved January 2, 2019, from http://www.cpecinfo.com/news/cpec-and-the-21st-century-convergence-of-civilizations-/MTAzMg==

[37] D. Mitra, *To Meet Indian Concerns, China Offers to Re-Name China-Pakistan Economic Corridor*. (New Delhi, India: External Affairs, 2017, May 8). Retrieved December 30, 2018, from https://thewire.in/diplomacy/china-pakistan-india-obor

Europe through maritime routes of communication. The Central and Northern Corridors go through several states while the Southern Corridor which is also known as CPEC includes just a single state i.e. Pakistan. The two parts of BRI fill the infrastructure gap particularly in Asia. The purpose is connecting the markets of Asia, Europe and Africa by overland and sea connectivity routes.[38]

Central Asia will also play crucial role in the project. It is not only important for its energy resources but also for its location because the overland connectivity to the markets of Africa, Asia and Europe. It is also a common perception that BRI is aimed at increasing Chinese influence in Central Asia. BRI will provide excellent opportunities for Chinese manufacturers and companies to access the overseas markets for a wide range of products such as over produced steel electronics, construction material and a host of other consumer goods. As per The Economist 'for Chinese made products' the adventure to Europe via ocean takes around two months whereas the 10800 km journey by trains from Chongqing in South-West China to Duesburg, Germany by means of Kazakhstan-Russia-Poland (10800 km) takes up to 14 days. In this regard, in order to consolidate and materialize the BRI initiative, the SEZs in Xinjiang i.e. Khorgos (China-Kazakh border) and Kashgar (Pak-China border) can play an important role.[39]

China will ensure BRI through Asian infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with $100 billion, the Silk Road Fund with $40 billion and the BRICS with $50 billion.[40] And further funds for these institutions will be raised in the future. There institutes will counter the hegemony of International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), and Asian Development Bank (ADB). The BRI will enhance Chinese influence in Central Asia. Russian also titled to the project. The hurdles that Russia is facing from the U.S and Europe is diverting it to be dependent on the East rather on the West.[41]

It is worth noticing that the developing economies find their interests and converge it with the Chinese interest to get funds for their development. The developing economies are attracted by BRI because the ADB, WB and IMF are exploiting to fund development activities in the developing states. The Silk Road Fund, the BRICS Bank and the AIIB are

[38] P. Cai, Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative. *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, (2017): 1-26

[39] J. Sagi, & I. Engelberth, The Belt and Road Initiative – a Way Forward to China's Expansion. *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal*, (2018): 9-38

[40] F. A. Indeo, Comprehensive Strategy to Strengthen China's Relations with Central Asia. *China's Belt And Road: A Game Changer?*, (2017): 35-52

[41] S. A. Khan, Contemporary geostrategic environment of Central Asia: the US, Russian and Chinese plans of integration. *Central Asia*, (2016):1-22

the alternative channels having full capacity of funding the mega infrastructural development projects connecting the continent of Europe and Asia. The annual requirement for infrastructure development projects in Asia is $750 billion until 2020.[42] In addition, the low income countries of Central Asia and Eastern Europe will also become beneficiaries from investment and infrastructural projects.

However, the BRI is not free of challenges. It has some inherent challenges, the most important being the geopolitical challenges. Central Asia historically has remained under the Russian sphere of influence and BRI must keep this reality in mind and does not try to disturb the historical facts. China is mindful of this and has approached Central Asia just for economic activity with no aims of political challenge to Russian influence. At this point, it has embraced Russia as its geo-political and geo-strategic partner in the region. Europe is also observing carefully the Chinese approach towards Eastern and Central Europe. These developments have made it difficult for some Asian countries to take sides between the U.S and China, but then finally have opted for AIIB.[43] There are still concern over Chinese cheaper goods hurting the local economies. However Chinese competitiveness is not a threat at the global level. The apprehensions about Chinese meddling in domestic politics and seizure of raw materials have been voiced too.[44] However, U.K and other American allies joined AIIB in spite of the U.S disappointment.

Furthermore, there is a motivation with regards to BRI on enhancing the living standard of the states in the Eurasian zone of the Silk Road. The Balkan states like Serbia and Montenegro as well as Malaysia have shown great interest in developing infrastructure to take advantage of MSR. The target of MSR is the underperforming economies. It aims at infrastructural development and increased connectivity with underperforming and middle-income states such as Malaysia and Pakistan especially through the building of ports including Kuantan port and Gwadar port. The Global rise of China can be attributed to Chinese wisdom in the economic affairs and its art of diplomacy. Overland Silk Road (OSR) was started by China investing in Pakistan and Central Asia. China has regarded

[42] E. Cau, Geopolitical Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative: The Backbone for a New World Order? *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal*, (2018): 39-106

[43] S. Boros, Changing Role of China in the International Politics of the Last 15 Years in Reflection to the US. *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal*, (2018): 221-246

[44] F. A Indeo, Comprehensive Strategy to Strengthen China's Relations with Central Asia. *China's Belt And Road: A Game Changer?*, (2017): 35-52

Pakistan as an old and trusted ally and signed initial projects worth $46 billion for its economic development. Indeed the single largest economic project by China in any of its friendly state.[45]

Through BRI China is outsourcing manufacturing to its western region where the cost of production and labor is comparatively cheaper. The uplift of marginalized western areas is another concern, along with the purpose of mainstreaming these regions. Moreover the Chinese perception of South Asian, European, Central Asian, Middle East and African markets is another reason for this shift from eastern to western region. The economic rationale is the main driving force behind BRI. It indicates China's achievements and standing in the global political economy. Over the years China has mastered development of low-cost power-plants, highways, ports, railways and telecommunication. It is also an accepted reality that investment and trade is the most ideal approach to achieving trust and winning allies amongst the strategically important states.[46]

Through CPEC, Chinese will enhance and sustain its role in Middle Eastern energy import through Gwadar. If the interests of China are threatened in the Middle East, the South China Sea, the East China Sea, Taiwan or blockade of oil supplies by the United States, Beijing will impose a naval blockades on Japanese and European oil supplies from the port of Gwadar. Such a move may lead to confrontation with the United States Navy, and everything is possible at that time.[47]

In the developing world, China through trade and investment is solving the issues of poor current account deficit, domestic savings and lack of infrastructural development. Most of the states under BRI are either rated below or unrated investment grade. China's ability and investment suits these underdeveloped states. The BRI also helps China meeting the domestic challenges of overcapacity in certain sectors such as building materials, railway equipment, capital and construction. It also provides the outlet for Chinese savings. However, the sheer economic size of China is not in harmony with its voting rights in the global financial institutions i.e. WB, ADB and IMF. Regardless of economic size and economic achievements of China, the U.S led west is unwilling to award the status of market economy to China in the WTO. So, by the end of 2016, China launched a legal action against the U.S led west about its economic status in WTO.[48]

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[45] M. Adnan, & B. Fatima, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Road to Development and its Challenges. *South Asian Studies, 31*(2), (2016): 609-624

[46] A. Amighini, Towards a New Geography of Trade?. *China's Belt and Road: a Game Changer?*, (2017, January 21):121-140

[47] H. M. Sadiq, *The End of The Great Game*, (Karachi: HMS Books, 2016)

[48] J.Hurley, S. Morris, & G. Portelance, Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective. *Center for Global Development*, (2018): 1-38

In 2014, China's nominal GDP share was almost 14% of the world. But its outstanding voting share in the IMF (4%), WB (4.42%) and ADB were only 5.5% respectively.[49] This prearrangement ensures American predominance in the WB, Europeans in the IMF and Japanese in the ADB. The efforts to bring reforms in these institutes are not fruitful despite of China's hold of 30% of global reserves in US dollars, and being the major trading state in the world.[50]

China started AIIB in 2016. It will change the international financial Landscape. AIIB is attracting underdeveloped and developing states in the world. Larry Summers, USA former treasury secretary remarked that the setup of AIIB will increase Chinese financial influence and will decrease the financial influence of the U.S across the world.[51] The BRI help China to make advances in key sectors such as telecommunication, power and banking system. As compare to dollar, euro and pound, the Chinese currency (RMB) is also gaining ground in the international market as well as in the international currency basket. Whereas with great accomplishments of the BRI will act like a force multiplier for the raise of RMB in the world. Furthermore, it will positively influence China Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) in the international currency basket.[52]

The Chinese mainland manufacturing rebalancing strategy aims at shifting the focus from economically more well off and eastern coastal regions of China to underdeveloped western provinces in order to exploit cheap labour and land there. The most immediate effect of this inland move of manufacturing is that China has been saved from outsourcing low cost manufacturing and outward migration to other states. Secondly it has a positive lifting effect on the economies of the underprivileged inland provinces; however, the landlocked provinces have an issue of exports over sea route. With BRI and CPEC access to Central Asian markets have helped overcome this problem. The principle profits of the BRI Includes the space and time dimensions as well as the lower logistic costs. When President Obama in 2009 declared Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) in order to regain

[49] G. Stec, China's Belt and Road Initiative is Neither a Strategy, Nor a Vision. It is a Process. . *European Institute for Asian Studies*, (2018): 1-7

[50] H. Lu, & C.Rohr, *China Belt and Road Initiative*, (Cambridge & Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2018).

[51] P. Cai, Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative. *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, (2017): 1-26

[52] J. Hurley, S.Morris, & G. Portelance, Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective. *Center for Global Development*, (2018): 1-38

global leadership in trade from China, the world saw the development of BRI as a reaction to the American proposed TPP.[53]

1.4 Discussion

Russia and China are considered by the United States as their main competitors. Russia viewed the U.S as a strategic opponent and decided to work closely with China in the region against the United States. China is trying to balance India at the regional level and the United States at the global levels. China locally pursues a balance between India and the United States, and the United States has expanded its strategic relationships with India to counter Beijing at the regional and global levels. The new geo-economics and political alignments and alliances are all for aiming to balance and re-balance the major power in this region. The orientation of the region will determine by the China, Russia and the U.S plans of integration.

The CPEC is a strategic project to circumvent the U.S-led unstable and fragile Afghanistan and to approach the Central Asian Republics. The Pak-China relations improved economic aspects to nuclear and strategic cooperation through CPEC. This program will further tighten the bond between these two states. The inner crescent that is Heartland, are up for grasps through CPEC and BRI. The integration of Central Asia is central in the geo-strategic environment of the region. Any great power that effectively integrates Central Asian Republics with world markets will be on winning positions. The competitive and cooperative structural frameworks of the great powers are the U.S New Silk Road declared in 2011, the Russia's EAEU in 2012, followed by the China's BRI in 2013.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, the former National Security Advisor to the Government of the U.S from 1977 to 1981, put substantial stress on Eurasia's significance on the globe reporting that in order to having hold over Afghanistan and Central Asia is parallel to having hold over Eurasia. Applying Brzezinski's theory, it suggests that invasion of Afghanistan by the US was its strategy to pave a way to Central Asia, from where they could ultimately establish landmass hold over Eurasia. The America however declared its agenda as that of promoting democracy and to eradicate terrorists as well as building economic reforms and human rights in Central Asia, but the operational policy of USA has been to eliminate or drastically reduce Russian influence in the region by promoting non-Iranian, non-Chinese and non-Russian routes for energy pipeline.

The Beijing policy of "Go West" initially solved the issues with CARs through Shanghai Five mechanism later on evolving into SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) to establish good trade and smooth

[53] P. Duarte, China in the Heartland: The Challenges and Opportunities of OBOR for Central Asia. *Central Asia Program*, (2018): 11-20

energy relations with Central Asia. China's relation with Central Asia in regards to energy and trade is precisely dependent on stability of Xinjiang. China during the last decade has replaced Russia as a major trading partner of the region. Security is one of the main issues for China. China in the region with local regimes is making ties for stability and security purposes. However, Russia in the second half of 1990s have shown renewed interests in the region after which it has been setting its objectives accordingly including using this region as a buffer region for Islamic South, to protect Russians ethnic population, beneficial from economic point of view and political stability. Russia, in comparison to China and USA well linked with the region through historical and political arrays. Moscow till date claims historical linkages and traditions with Central Asia, considering it as their backyard and sphere of influence.

The major powers have been playing the tug of war for establishing control over hydrocarbons resources of Caspian region and transportation infrastructure given the strategic importance for Central Asia's geographical location. The competition among great powers for establishing control over Central Asia is multi-faceted. However it seems that Central Asia's integration in this New Great Game is the main theme for the struggle between American' New Silk Road, Eurasian Economic Union and China's BRI.

The U.S. initiative on capital intensive programs seemed less focused, and more so on the technical and regulatory challenges in the region, as building of Custom Training Staff College in Kyrgyzstan and Border Management Staff College in Tajikistan, as part of the projects of New Silk Road initiative. Other projects of the U.S in the region presently are also under the New Silk Road initiative including the reframing of APTTA (Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade agreement) and providing agreement in supporting the cross border relationship between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. The U.S State Department has shown emphasis on reducing time, improving security and in facilitating border crossing in such pattern that brings regional countries into bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements. The U.S. plan of integration for Central Asia has barely materialized. The U.S as having a geostrategic approach rather than geo-economic approach, has faced many hurdles on ground. Michal Romanovski, a Eurasian expert, reported that the U.S New Silk Road initiative is a misfire because it is entirely focused on Afghanistan and poorly financed**.**

In Central Asia, the security competition is also found between SCO and CSTO. The insecurity remains. Both the organization are also collaborating at secretariat level, but they have not yet accomplished the level of clear labor division as well as other joint programs have also not

been announced at its earliest hour. The Russian observation is that the CSTO led by Russian is more operational and advanced organization. On the other hand, the U.S has no interest in engaging with CSTO either in Afghanistan or Central Asia. In addition, the economic potential of China is adequate to cause alert in Washington and Moscow. The probabilities of misleading and secret rivalry exist between various players. In addition, the worldwide financial crisis constrained others to re-calculate their economic assurances to Central Asia; it opened the path for China to invest in energy fields of Central Asia.

In 2008, the trade between China and Central Asia had exceeded the trade level of Russia. The trade between Central Asia and China is considerably more than the official statistics of Central Asian governments and that is most probably due to regional railway and road transit corridors, the aids and the grants that are independent than the joint programs with Russia. Some experts predict that the EAEU led by Russia is as an attempt to curb the Chinese activity in Central Asia. However, the Russian government never voiced its worries openly. Putin openly endorsed China as strategic partner more than once. Russia accepting the rise of China in Central Asia is an effort to counter the Western influence in the region. Russia fears China newly emerging role in Central Asia and is apprehensive of becoming subordinate to the role of Beijing.

The resurgent Russia in Central Asia is neither post-colonial power nor Soviet Union. Russia is trying to organize Central Asia on the basis of different organizations like CU and CSTO. As per Russia perception the CU will later on transform in to EAEU. Both of these organizations are in competition with EU and NATO regard to their function and outlook. Moscow may have numerous objectives in Central Asia but the main objective is dominating influence over others partners. The relationship of China and the U.S with Russia are vital factors in plan of Russian strategies towards Central Asia. Accordingly, the differences in perceptions increase the great power rivalry in Central Asia.

In Central Asia, the Moscow success is not clear. It is hard to evaluate the influence that Russia wants in Central Asia. With passage of time the Russian perception kept changing in Central Asia, due to other great powers. The Russian quest for influence in Central Asia has not fully succeeded if the Russian and Central Asian relationship is influence by other great power. In addition, the EAEU aspiration is vulnerable due to limited foreign policy options that Central Asians have in the rest of the world. The technical and linguistic legacy in Central Asia from the previous Soviet Union has resulted in strong ties of Russia with Central Asia. The trade between Russian-Central Asian is growing and there are a large number of Central Asians send remittances back home while working in Russia. The traditional influence of Russia is still present in Central Asia.

Although, Central Asia has the potential to become convergence of interest between China and Russia by integrating Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) and EAEU for a win-win purposes. The strong ties between Russia and China can be perceived as a threat by the U.S led West. The Sino-Russian cooperation will provide stability and can be predicted that it could balance the multipolar world order. The U.S and Russia want a sphere of influence in region because of the natural resources as well as geostrategic location of Central Asia. Russia strongly considers Central Asia as her special sphere of influence, but the U.S openly disagrees with this idea.

However in the context of Central Asia the competition is not found in the relationship of Russia and China. It is clear from Central Asian pipeline politics, when Georgia tries to bypass Russian land to diversify the energy supply of Central Asia towards the west i.e. the BTC (Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan) pipeline. In 2008, it was confronted by Russia. Similarly, in Ukraine, the case of Crimea is considered as one of the main outlets for Russian energy towards Europe, was managed brutally by Russia. Then again China has effectively constructed various gas and oil pipelines from Central Asia which are operational but Russia did not retaliated in the same manner. There are three main motives behind Russian and Chinese interaction over Central Asia.

1. Russia has worked together with China to counter the U.S in the region; Russia without cooperation from China can't do this.
2. Russia is not in position to counter or control China-Central Asia partnership because this partnership is mutually beneficial for both regions.
3. The movement of energy resources of Central Asian towards the east will decrease the competitor with Russia for European market.

After the breakup of Soviet Union, the unipolar world has become imbalanced, anarchic and dangerous. A hegemon must respect and protect the other states' sovereignty in a unipolar world. When it isn't the situation in the unipolar world, then the states would be dissatisfied with in the system and they try to replace or challenge the hegemon. It gives birth to Sino-Russian cooperation in the region to counter the U.S moves in Central Asia.

Russia also looks forward to Pakistan's geographical position. The Sino-Russian strategic cooperation assists to integrate Pakistan into Eurasia in a peaceful manner. The multimodal CPEC gives the best chance to connect Eurasia with South Asia. In addition, Russia improves its relations with Pakistan and its links with Taliban will further reinforce its position in the region. This relationship benefited Russia, in the case of southern flank. The Pak-Russian understandings for the development of gas pipeline from Lahore to Karachi and in the sale of hardware are the major advancements

towards Pakistan. Russia is willing to take risks and playing bold on the chessboard of Eurasia.

Pakistan is one of the major states to benefit from China's policy of shift of manufacturing from mainland to inland. China is emphasizing upon the economic development in Pakistan as it serves its own interest. The economic growth of Afghanistan and Pakistan will ensure to open Central Asian and Iranian markets for the Chinese goods and investments as well as to import oil from Iran and other gulf states. Terrorism and extremism are the menace feeding upon underdevelopment. This threat can be dealt with and eradicated as the Chinese economic activity will bring a healthy change in the region torn by violence and extremism and will result in paradigm shift.

However, BRI is mainly focused on Central Asia and it is expected to expand beyond Central Asia in the form of rail-links, ports, oil and gas pipelines. For this purpose, China have signed agreement with various countries in building such infrastructure including Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with US $1 billion, 8 billion, 15 and 30 billion, respectively. In the context Of BRI, the new regional and economic order as well as the new world order is part of the whole debate. Earlier initiatives in the history like the EU or the industrial development of Japan also happened in the same manner. In the beginning, there initiatives were perceived as challenges but were ultimately integrated into the world economy. So far, China have not declared or shown any intention of toppling the global economic order. The Chinese BRI seems to be compatible with organization including RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, FTAAP (Free Trade Area of the Asia pacific), TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), WTO and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation).

However, there is a reality in geo-strategic, geo-political and geo-economic rivalry and there are concerns about it. It is a common perception that Beijing is trying to shift 90% of world trade from maritime routes to overland routes. China also aims to maintain a balance between the maritime and overland trade routes. Any imbalance will increase the concerns of maritime trading nations because the U.S and Japan already raised concerns about AIIB which is a challenge to ADB. The rivalry between there institutes is also resulting into geo-political crisis. The geopolitical and geo-strategic aspects of BRI should be handled carefully. It is also important to note that the declining power of the US will lead to her strong alliance with India.

2. Conclusion

In a nutshell, Central Asia is facing geo-strategic, geo-economic and geo-political changes because of different integration plans of major powers such as USA, Russia and China. The great powers interest diverge therefore it is delaying the process of integration in the region. Russia is the major

player to establish her traditional influence in the region after the Crimea. Chinese influence is increasing in the region while USA attitude may change with the passage of time because of its partial withdrawal from the region. Russia is the important player in the hard security domain, having close relationship especially under the CSTO. After the Crimea period, Russia accelerated economic and strategic cooperation with China. However the Russian and Chinese interests converge and diverge in Central Asia and it depends upon how they manage their relationship in the region. On ground reality, the New Silk Road Initiative by U.S barely materialized due to the perceptions of regional states about the U.S policies.

As EAEU is by all accounts a sort of close regionalism and CU having protectionist measures in the form of uniform duty against the non-member states. However the CPEC and BRI offer a sort of integration which is based on open regionalism. In such case, the EAEU can only have check on the movement of the Chinese products to various Central Asian Republics. Similarly the EAEU has been planned to manage by supra national institutes such as Court of Eurasian Economic Union and Eurasian Economic Commission. Whereas BRI is based on open regionalism where the projects are the mutual concern of the signatory parties relating to specific sectors or projects. Open regionalism focuses to integrate those markets that have flexible relations and to address the shortcomings of close regionalism. The idea of open regionalism involves outward orientation and no need to surrender sovereignty; at the same time states are free to join other regional organizations. BRI is the combination of both the land and maritime routes.

The main question regarding regional integration is that whether it is geo-economic or geo-political interests that dominate the process when national preferences of regional and extra-regional states are shaped. It means the regional states need priorities. The geo-economic interests of the regional states for a win-win situation. It has been noticed that great powers link their geo-strategic interests to integration plans that can be a kind of spoiling factor as a result of their divergent natures. However the developed cross border infrastructure as a result of these integration plans in Central Asia will increase CAR's bargaining power in international relations. Whether this is BRI or the US New Silk Road initiative or EAEU, the result must be the regional integration and therefore peace promotion and shared growth would be guaranteed.

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SINO-PAK RELATIONS (THE DOMINANT DIMENSION THROUGH THE LENS OF PRINT MEDIA)

Muhammad Shafi[*] and Ahmed Farhan Saeed[**]

Abstract

Media, influences topics of public importance. In academia, the recent crescendo in Pak-China relationship is interpreted variedly, such as economic, political, security/strategic, social and even a section of society conjectures China as the second East India Company. The increasing reputation of China in Pakistan, projection of projects such as CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) and frequent reflection of the same in national media, also triggers the academic discussion. This study attempts to highlight various Dimensions of Pak-China relations under the framework of Agenda setting theory and to find out what dimensions, in particular, economic, political, security/strategic and social, dominate this relation? The methodology employed is mainly qualitative, sprinkled with empirical elements, such as data on Pak-China relations, drawn from print media of Pakistan. This might prove one modicum way to determine the nature of Pak-China relationship.

Keywords- Sino-Pak, media, Newspaper, BRI, Print media.

Introduction

A good newspaper is a nation talking to itself. However, on the contrary, in current times, especially in developing states the print media sways the nation's perception on many significant subjects. Wisely, the Russian historian portrayed the role of media, in the late imperial period, however, very close to current reality and said, "The print media teaches the reader to think about what he does not know, and know what he does not understand". The shrewd assessment regarding media, in the late nineteenth century, still relevant and insightful, in understanding the worldview of

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individuals and nations at large. Sometimes it so happens that the media focus so much on a single event and ignore other important subjects of public interests, in a way media news reporting controls which issues become the focus of community attention.

Agenda-Setting Theory built on the same notion that the mass media sets the agenda for what people should care about and by repeating publication of a specific news on a subject, in a certain way, finally commit it to public memory and consciousness. Why and on whose direction print media focuses some news and ignores others, though an important question, however, is beyond the scope of this study. Whereas, this study focuses onto find out the dominant dimensions through a perceptive study of print media.

This study, dominantly descriptive, focuses on frequency of news occur, in print media, on a specific dimension of Pak-China relations. Most of the time, the relationship between China and Pakistan has been highlighted by government functionaries and leaders, mainly as economic and trade oriented. While certain quarters look at it as mainly strategic. This study hypothesizes that frequency of appearing of either dimension, economic, political, strategic or social, in print media, determines and will help in understanding the nature of Pak-China relations. What and which dimension of Pak-China relations, dominate the print media? The study mainly assesses four dimensions, economic, political, and geostrategic or social, and finds out which one dominate Pak-China relationship. Whereas, English language newspapers published in Pakistan, considered comparatively more open and a viable source of data on Pak-China relations, have been picked up as a source of data.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Agenda-Setting is more appropriate to employ to the subject. Its first key assumption Agenda Setting theory is that media filters and shapes rather than just reflecting stories to the audience. Media concentrates on topics and sways the masses to recognize it as more important, although the same might not be popular and of public interest. Hence, media concentrates on few issues, and sways masses to recognize it more important than others, manipulating public prioritization on issues[1]. This research is

[1] Comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, McCombs and Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determines public opinion. Since the 1968 study, published in a 1972 edition of Public Opinion Quarterly, more than 400 studies have been published on the agenda-setting function of the mass media, and the theory continues to be regarded as relevant. Studies have shown that what the media decides to expose in certain countries correlates with their views on things such as politics, economy and culture. Countries that tend to have more political power are more likely to receive media exposure. Financial resources, technologies, foreign trade and money spent on the military can be some of the main factors that explain coverage inequality

dominantly descriptive, focusing on frequency of specific themes/dimensions, economic, political, security/strategic, cultural, appeared in print media, regarding Pak-China relation. Hence, in a way determine which one dimension is prioritized by media and why.

The second assumption, more attention print media gives to an issue, the more important it becomes for masses. Linking to this assumption, while analyzing the news data, regarding Pak-China relationship, the paper will assess that why a certain dimension or dimensions, are more highlighted in media than the others, what is the underlying factor that forces it to do so?

Methodology

Employing Agenda Setting Theory to address research question such as, to find out dominant dimension in Pak-China relation which is reflected by Pakistani print media and to ascertain the reason. Epistemologically, the problem is placed in constructivism that entails dominantly a qualitative approach to the study, focusing the four years period (2013-2016). One way to address these questions is to employ the qualitative methodology, the thematic analysis, of the text, the news reports, and editorials, published on Pak-China relations, in five English language newspapers of Pakistan. Subsequently, data was collected from five English language newspapers, Daily Times, Dawn, Frontier Post, The News, and Express Tribune. The print media data, regarding Pak-China relation, is appropriate in the local context, being less expensive, less time consuming and cheap source. An issue or limitation, print media as a source of data might not provide the whole truth but at least some partial understanding on the subject may take place.

Operationalization of Variables:

The paper attempts to understand Pak-China relations through a correlation between two variables, 'frequency of dimension' in print media and 'nature of relationship' between the two states. Thus, a correlation between 'frequency of appearance of a dimension', economic, political, security/strategic, cultural, in the print media (newspapers) and 'nature of relationship' between Pakistan and China relation, is to be ascertained. If the frequency of news is dominated by economic dimension, then the nature of the relationship will be economic or otherwise. Thus, whatever dimension dominate the variable 'frequency of a dimension' in news, determines the nature of Pak-China relationships. Therefore, each news item regarding Pak-China relations published in any newspaper was underlined, assessed for the dimension and labeled accordingly either as economic, political, security/strategic, cultural .

During research it was observed that a single publication sometimes contains more than one dimension/themes. Many publications were found highlighting security and economic dimensions at the same time. However,

to keep the study more focused each publication was selected only for one dimension/coding. The dominant coding was decided in light of the heading or title of the news chosen.

Descriptive Analysis of Data

Data, identified in five English newspapers, regarding Pak-China relations; categorized into four dimensions/theme: economic, political, security/strategic and social. The data displayed a broadened role of China vis-a-vis the world and with regard to Pakistan. It ranges from China's action in the strategic South China Sea to ETIM. A number of dimensions were found reflected in the contents of the news, however, only four dimensions, economic, political security/strategic and social, were focused. The period of data collected is extend over four years (2013-2016), in various newspapers.

Table. 1 presents the year-wise classification of different dimension as follow.

- Each year, from 2013 to 2016, strategic dimensions dominate the print media as the dominant trend in Pak-China relationships.
- the years, 2013 and 2014, are dominated by economy, however, second to strategic interests,
- The year 2015 is dominated by political dimension after strategic dimension.
- The year 2016 is dominated by strategic dimensions.

Table. 1 presents the year-wise classification of different dimension as follow.

	2013	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Total Publications	92	116	127	91
Economic	31	33	26	21
Political	18	14	47	29
Social	4	12	5	3
Security / Strategic	39	57	49	38

Source: Newspaper Data available Area Study Centre (Russia, China and Central Asia), (2013-2016)

Out of total news items published during four years, strategic themes dominate each year. The theme topped 39, (in 2013), 57, (in 2014), 49, in

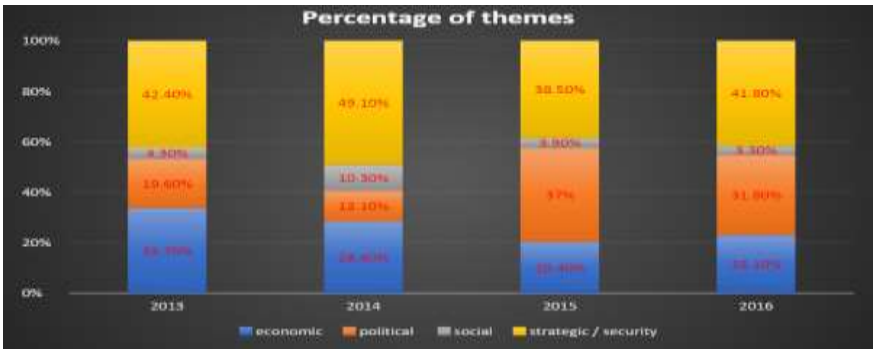
(2015) and 38, in (2016), respectively. The second prominent dimension, after the strategic dimension, is the economic one. However, it dominates the years 2013-14 only and that too after strategic at top. The political dimension stood third after economics, it dominated the year 2015, however, second to the strategic dimension. The year 2016 saw the sheer rise of security dimension, leaving far behind the economic dimension.

Furthermore, the in-depth analysis of individual dimensions offers more insight into the data collected from 2013 to 2016.

Strategic

Out of total 426 news publications, 183 alone were published on 'strategic dimension' which is 42.9 % of the total news. These news items and publications highlighted China's strategic and security related actions and policies.

Figure. 1 presents the Frequency wise distribution of news of particular dimension



Source: Newspaper Data available Area Study Centre (Russia, China and Central Asia), (2013-2016)

Economic

'Economic dimension' was second to 'strategic dimension', in print media from the year 2013 to 2016. The economic dimension embodied various economic subjects ranging from China's economic rise to her aids to other states, Gawadar Port, CPEC, India related and much more.

Political

Out of the total 426 published news items, 111 were related to the 'political dimension' which is 26.1 % of the total. In the period of study, the 'political dimension' moved back and forth between the highest 33.70%, in 2015 to its lowest 20.4 %, in 2016. This way, the political dimension stood third on the scale, after 'economic dimension' as second and 'strategic dimension' at top. Daily, the Dawn, published on political dimension, out of total, 52 news items were of political nature which is 25% of total

publication. The News, Express Tribune and Daily Times maintained low emphasis on 'political dimension'. In four year, 2013-16, the percentage share of the newspapers to 'political dimension, remained as, The News 18.03%, Express Tribune 12.7% and Daily Times 17.2%, respectively.

Social Dimension:

News items appeared in print media on 'social dimension' of Pak-China relation is dismally low. Out of total 426 publications of Pak-China relation, only 24 could be published on social dimension, a paltry part, about 5. 7 % of total publications. The daily, the Express Tribune, had the highest number of publications as news items on 'social dimension' of Pak-China relation. The daily could publish 11 news items on 'social dimension, out of total 60 items, a 17.4% of total publications on Pak-China relations. 'Social dimension' covered by Daily Times, Dawn, Frontier Post and The News stood at 3.7 %, 3.12 %, 3.13% and 4.9 %, respectively.

The Context of Agenda Setting

Interestingly, the newspapers seem also influenced by their specific context, circumstance and environment. Newspaper operating from Peshawar media house is found focusing more on the political and strategic aspect of Pak-China relations. The newspaper allocated almost 45 % of its new items, 78 out of 176 news items, in highlighting the 'strategic dimension' of Pak China relationship. Additionally, the daily, published highest number of news items on 'political dimension', 62 items out of total 176, a 35 % of total publications, from 2013-2016.

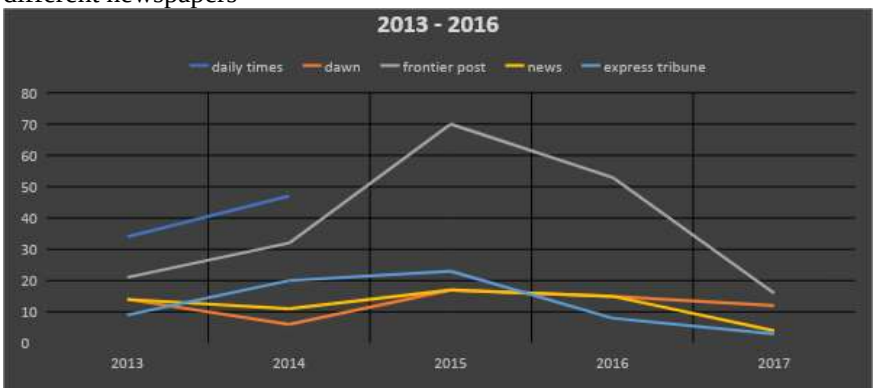
The daily 'Dawn', Karachi based, a business hub, and 'The News International', Islamabad based, capital of Pakistan, preferred to highlight the 'economic dimension' of Pak-China relations. The Dawn, out of its total 52 published news items on Pak-China relation, 19 were related to 'economic dimension' a 36 % of total publications on 'economic dimension'. The newspaper could publish 18 out of total 52 on 'strategic dimension'.

The daily, the News international, stood highest, 44.2 % of its total publication, regarding Pak-China relations were focused on 'economic dimension'. The paper focused 24 news items on the 'economic dimension' out of total 57 publications regarding Pak-China relationship.

Annual Frequency of News across Different Newspapers

Graph No. 1 presents the annual frequency of news appeared in print media related to Pak-China relations. It is evident from the graph that there was a gradual rise in media coverage, on Pak-China relations, until it touches peak in 2015. Whereas, Pak-China relations touched its lowest in 2016, need to explore reasons for this.

Graph. 1 presents the year wise Distribution of the news appeared in different newspapers



Furthermore the Analysis of Graph No. 2, 3, 4 and 5 reveals the following:

- The 'strategic dimension' in Pak-China relations, is followed by 'economic and political dimensions, respectively.
- The media houses, Dawn, and the News International, put more emphasis on the economic scope of Pak-China relation. Both the papers reflect the interest of the center, main urban centers, and business class of Pakistan. Daily The Frontier Post, publications are dominated by 'strategic dimension' of Pak-China relation.
- Daily, the Frontier Post published highest number of news items on political dimension, 62 items out of total 176, during the four years period, a 35 % of its all publication.
- The least highlighted dimension, the 'social dimension' poorly reflected, 4% of the total publication, in print media.
- The daily, the Express Tribune, Karachi based, an urban area daily, had highest number of publications 'social dimension' of Pak-China relation, 11 news items out of total 60 new items which is 17.4% of total publications.
- Social aspect of China is barely touched by Pakistani print media. Social and culture are the most ignored category in print publications of Pakistan.

Conclusion

Addressing the research question, what dimension, in Pak-China relation, is prioritized by media and why? What are underlying factors that forces print media to do so? Addressing these questions in light of key assumptions of Agenda Setting Theory, the relevant data in the newspapers was identified, collected and sorted out according to economic, political, social and strategic dimensions. After analysis of the data it clearly displayed that the more frequent dimension highlighted in newspapers is

strategic one. Thus, print media and media houses promoted strategic dimension more than the rest of three dimensions. What is the intervening variable, one that pushes the media houses, to highlight the strategic dimension need to be explored?

Moreover, the reasons for newspapers to have a bias towards a specific dimension may also base on urban-rural or center-periphery divide. The urban/ center based newspapers highlighted economic and rural/ periphery based newspaper like 'daily the Frontier Post' at Peshawar, focused more on strategic dimension. However, if the first key assumption of Agenda Setting Theory, ***news does not reflect as it is rather shaped and filtered by the media*** is employed to the results it leads to the reality that the dimension was promoted on purpose by print media.

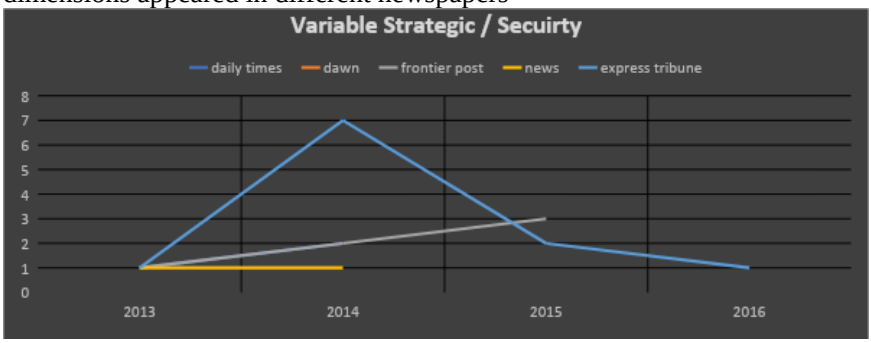
A section of scholarship argues that media was influenced by the government as part of media campaign especially before launch of CPEC, in 2013, hence media was influenced. This reality is also reflected in the Graph No.1, year wise distribution of news above. Moreover, the news stories after the launch of CPEC are more informative and descriptive in nature as compared to the ones before launch of CPEC which was mainly part of media campaign. (Taj Muhammad Mengal 2018).

It is also argued that in light of likely failure of Pakistan to provide security to CPEC, in presence of many challenges such as, terrorism, geostrategic compulsions, both regional and international, forced her to present the relationship as geostrategic (Rubina Masum 2015). And it is in this vein that T.V talk shows and online articles were influenced to portray strategic nature of Pak-China relations instead of others. The State of Pakistan is quite conscious of the role of media and will never allow it to portray an independent picture of Pak-China relation.

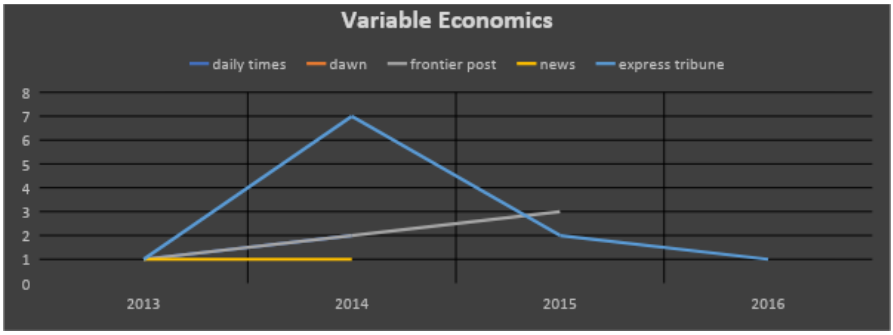
Acknowledgment

Data was collected from the newspapers available at Area Study Center, (Russia, China & Central Asia), University of Peshawar. The data so collected has been scanned for record and reference.

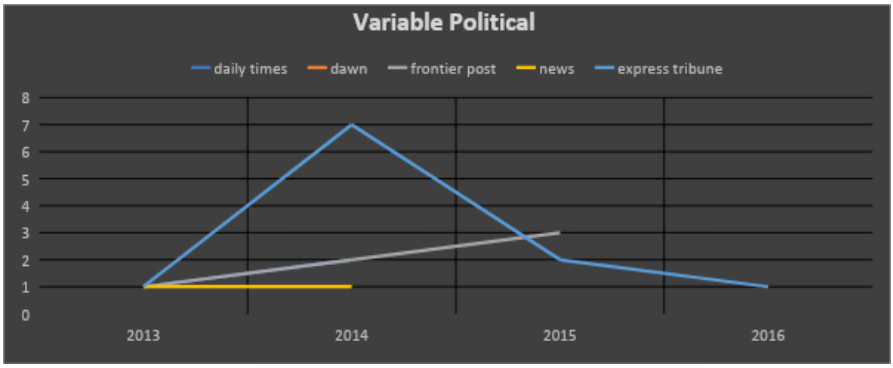
Graph NO. 2 presents the year wise Distribution of the news of different dimensions appeared in different newspapers



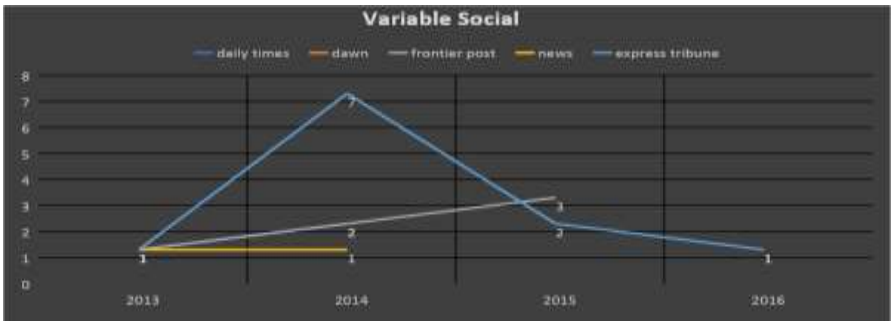
Graph NO. 3 presents the year wise Distribution of the news of different dimensions appeared in different newspapers



Graph NO. 4 presents the year wise Distribution of the news of different dimensions appeared in different newspapers



Graph NO. 5 presents the year wise Distribution of the news of different dimensions appeared in different newspapers



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GEOPOLITICS AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS OF THE BRITISH IN THE TRIBAL AREAS OF THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

Raid Khan[*] & Tariq Amin[**]

Abstract

The tribal region of the North West Frontier (NWF) of the Indian Sub-continent was geo-politically an important region for the British India. It provided a direct link to Afghanistan. During the colonial history of India, Afghanistan was used as a buffer between the expanding Russian Empire and India. So the tribal areas of the NWF were to be used as a buffer between Afghanistan and India in case Russia penetrate in Afghanistan. Beside this, controlling the tribal areas also helped in protecting the adjacent settled districts from the plunder of the tribesmen. The tribal areas also provided safe passages to the British convoys. The paper highlights colonization and administration of the tribal areas of the NWF, and the geopolitical interests of the British colonial power in this area. The paper explores all this through the lens of the colonial literature produced during that time.

Keywords: Tribal Land, Durand Line, FCR, Agencies, FRs and Malaks.

Introduction

The North West Frontier is the area that is located on border with Afghanistan. Afghanistan was used as a buffer state between British India and Russia. The tribal area that bordered Afghanistan was of utmost importance for the colonial British India. Their focus was on having a secured border in this area. Secured borders have been the top most priority of the great powers and empires. They strived persistently to secure their borders from intrusion. The more secure borders of the empire the more it

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was perceived powerful. Frontier region throughout history has been of primary concern for different regimes. The region is inhabited by the *Pakhtun* ethnic group with strong tribal structure having their own values, norms, customs and traditions. It therefore was important for the British rulers to be aware of the responses or reactions from this portion of population if any incursion or encroachment was made. Continuous resistance was seen from this portion of the population to the encroachment policies of the British. Lord Curzon rightly has stated that the most difficult and tiring struggle in which we have been engaged in India in modern times was undertaken with the Frontier tribes.[1]

Strategic Significance of the Frontier Region

The area of the Indian sub-continent which borders Afghanistan in the North West is situated at the junction of three significant regions of Asia that is India, Afghanistan and Central Asia. It is one of the most significant geostrategic areas of the world that has played a remarkable role in world history.[2] Historically Indian riches had attracted the foreign invasions. Before the English invasion the Indians witnessed continuous attacks on their land. It seemed that they were accustomed to these invasions. History is evident of the fact that India remained a hub of conquests, trade and migration.[3] Many writers have commented on the strategic importance of this region. In the book *"Frontier Facets: Pakistan's North West Frontier Province"* M. Athar (2007) has explained the importance of the region and also stating that this area is inhabited by the tribal people having their own characteristics like bravery and hospitality. David Dichter's observation about the region is that there are a few areas on the face of earth like the North West Frontier which have contributed a significant part as a transitional section between cultures and peoples.[4] Its importance can be gauged from the fact that it was the area which was most focused during British Empire and where careers of the British officials including that of Viceroys and the Prime Ministers depended. It was the region where a trivial incidence could instantly shoot up into an international disaster. The Frontier was so important for different powers that not only Afghanistan, India and

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[1] George Nathaniel Curzon, *Frontiers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 6, https://archive.org/details/frontiers00curz/page/n1.

[2] Muhammad Y. Effendi, "The North Western Route and the Invasions of the Indian Sub-Continent: A Historical Study in Modern Perspective," *Central Asia*, no. 54 (2004), 37.

[3] Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69.

[4] David Dichter, *The North-West Frontier of West Pakistan: A Study in Regional Geography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 3.

Britain were concerned about it but it also enticed Persia, China, Russia, Turkey and even France.[5]

British Empire during the rule of India was continuously into the problem of unsteady frontiers. Among these unstable frontiers the North West Frontier provided an additional anxiety. Besides the unstable situation at the frontier there was danger of Russian's expansion into Central Asia in the nineteenth century. This move of the Russians created fear and doubt in the minds of the British.[6] They were afraid that the Russians may exploit the unstable situation in the Frontier region. Thus protection of India was dependent on the North West Frontier region. Different policies were adopted to control the Frontier Tribal belt. It became a strategic zone for the British policy makers, where they adopted different policies to control the tribal people and this part of land for the protection of India. This tribal belt provided a natural boundary to the Indian sub-continent. Any invasion from the Western side, on the Indian plains was much difficult because supplies and reinforcement to the invading enemies was not possible through this difficult terrain.[7] Controlling this tribal belt thus seemed to be of great strategic advantage for the British Empire.

Imperial Defense and the Tribal Region

During the period (1801-1839) the British higher ups were worried regarding the growing Tsarist Russian threats of reaching the Indian borders. To counter this threat of Russian expansion towards India, some of the British officials advocated closed border policy, which was to keep the status quo in the bordered region of Afghanistan that is to let the Sikhs continue with their ruling and thus would be regarded as a buffer zone. There were other British officials who feared the unruly existence of the tribal belt between Peshawar and Kabul whose loyalties were not declared and who might be vulnerable to the Russian influence and designs. British officials who were keenly observing this situation were in support of Forward Policy. This policy meant that British should have direct control of the area beyond Indus up to the Kabul.[8]

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[5] Arthur Swinson, *North-West Frontier: People and Events 1839-1947* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 11.

[6] Robert Johnson, "Russians at the Gates of India? Planning the Defense of India, 1885-1900," *The Journal of Military History* 67, no. 3 (2003), 699, doi:10.1353/jmh.2003.0230.

[7] Javed Iqbal, "Khyber Pass: Geography, People and History," (PhD diss., University of Peshawar, 2005), 45.

[8] Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition & Memory in the North West Frontier* (Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2000), 23.

Britain position got strengthened by further annexation towards North Western regions. Punjab was annexed on 30 March 1849.[9] Sindh was annexed much before Punjab in 1843 from Baluch Talpur rulers.[10] The conquest of Punjab completed the shape of British India. They emerged as the masters of India who ruled India from 'the Indus to the Bay of Bengal'.[11] Thus they established the frontier of British India, the frontier which the British officials supported since the first Anglo Afghan war. British arrival in the region was welcomed with enthusiasm because they were fed up from the Sikh ruler's atrocities.[12] British annexation of this part of land brought them into contact for the first time with the *Pukhtun* tribes who inhabited the extensive chain of mountains that was a natural barrier or boundary between India and Afghanistan.[13] This region of the North West got prominence as a strategically most important border because beyond these tribes was Afghanistan and beyond it the continuously advancing Russian Empire. Thus the British government was aware of the fact that stability of India lies in the fact that peace be maintained along the border of Afghanistan.

The tribal people of this border land were completely different ethnically, linguistically and historically from the Muslims of Punjab. This tribal territory was beyond British control and was known as *ghair-ilaqa* (foreign/unknown land) or *yaghistan* (the land of rebels).[14] The British in the beginning never tried to control or subdue them. They even did not try to pass into the lands of these tribes nor did they bothered about the mountainous Khyber Pass. British administration was in the valley of Peshawar, Bannu and Derajat, which was the administrative border line of the country. Beyond this administrative line the area was unknown and it recognized no one's authority.

The British officials' response to the tribal people was very conciliatory. They were allowed to trade and to have free movements in the British administered areas. Access to medical and other assistance was provided to them. Even they were given permission to be recruited in forces like the police and military forces so as to encourage goodwill and cordial relations.[15] All this was to have them exposed to the benefits and developments of the British government to tame these unruly tribal people.

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[9] H. H. Dodwell, *The Cambridge History of India: British India, 1497-1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 556.
[10] Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 55.
[11] Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India. (3rd Ed.).* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 621.
[12] Sir O. Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C.-1957 A.D* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1958), 326.
[13] Sir W. Barton, *India's North West Frontier* (London: J. Murray, 1939), 56-59.
[14] Caroe, *The Pathans*, 347.
[15] Richard Temple, *Lord Lawrence* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1889), 79.

Besides this to maintain tranquility in the area, British government made agreements with the tribal people. The tribes agreed to these agreements because of monetary benefits. The financial benefits were in the form of allowances and subsidies. The tribes were to abide by the rules of agreements, to maintain peace and to secure the trading routes. If they did not keep these promises they were then inflicted with punishment in the form of economic blockades, taking them as prisoners, their properties might be seized and even in harsh circumstances military campaigns were waged against these tribes.

There were internal feuds among different tribes. The British also took advantage of the inter-tribal feuds to pit one tribe against the other. A system of collective responsibility was introduced by Herbert Edwardes.[16] Under the system whole of the tribe was to face punishment for the wrong of a single individual. For maintaining internal peace and tranquility and protecting Western frontier, Governor General Lord Dalhousie empowered Henry Lawrence[17] on 18 May 1849 to raise a force.[18] Thus a Trans-Frontier Brigade was created which later on in 1851 was named as the 'Punjab Irregular Force'.[19]

Durand Line: Demarcation of the *Pukhtun*'s Territory

In the last decade of the nineteenth century the British foreign policy was on the front. The tendency was to push forward up to the valleys of Wana in Waziristan and the Tochi Valley in an effort to get closer to the tribes. Whereas on the other side of the Frontier, the then king of Afghanistan Amir Abdur Rahman was also trying to assert his suzerainty over various border tribes.[20] To materialize the scheme of demarcating the boundary, the Viceroy chose Lord Robert for this mission. But Amir opposed his appointment because of his role in the Second Anglo-Afghan war. To bring Amir to the table talks Viceroy withheld the shipment of guns and ammunitions, which was on way towards Kabul. It was to be released if Abdur Rahman accepted the British delegation to Kabul. After agreeing on the conditions, a delegation went to Kabul under the leadership of Mortimer

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[16] Major-General Sir Herbert Benjamin Edwardes was an English administrator, soldier, and statesman who was active in the Punjab (1819-68) and also served as Commissioner of Peshawar (1853-9).

[17] Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence**,** (born June 28, 1806, Matura, Ceylon [now Sri Lanka]—died July 4, 1857, Lucknow, India), was an English soldier and administrator who helped to consolidate British rule in the Punjab region.

[18] Timothy R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1998), 5-6.

[19] R. North, *The Punjab Frontier Force: A Brief Record of their Services 1846-1924* (Dera Ismail Khan: Headquarters Waziristan District., 1934), 1.

[20] Jagannath P. Misra, *The Administration of India Under Lord Lansdowne, 1888-1894* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1975), 45.

Durand. In the agreement that took place on 12 November, 1893 Afghan government relinquished their claim to the North of Oxus region and agreed to draw a boundary line in the South.[21] Both the parties to the agreement compromised on certain territories. British government gave assent to the Afghan claim on Asmar. Afghan government on the other hand agreed not to intervene in Swat, Dir and Bajawar. In the South of the Frontier, a compromise also took place in Waziristan Area where Birmal, a portion of Waziristan, was left to the Amir and in response Amir renounced his claim on Waziristan. Both the parties to the agreement agreed not to meddle with the internal affairs of the tribes on both sides of the border. British government agreed to let the shipments of guns and ammunitions to the Amir. Besides this his annual subsidy was also increased from twelve lakh to eighteen lakh rupees.[22]

Boundary of the Durand Line divided the *Pukhtun* homeland and tribes disregarding of their common history, tradition and tribal affinities. Durand Line for some tribes was seen as illogical and an insult which was completely unfamiliar to their nomadic and independent life style.[23] The Durand Line thus did not stop the tribal people from crossing the line. Amir Abdur Rahman on the other hand considered these tribes to be under his suzerainty and paid subsidies to the tribes. Davies was of the view that Durand Line did not bother to take care of the ethnic sensibilities but the purpose was to serve the British interests that is to have a line of resistance against Russian expansion.[24]

Demarcation of the boundary arose the problem of the political assimilation of the tribes straddling the border. As the border was porous and the tribesmen would move frequently across the border, made the British much more anxious and worried. All this compelled the British to make a legal framework for controlling the Frontier, which undoubtedly was a difficult task.[25] Both the Amir and the British failed to bring tranquility and peace to the Frontier region. The tribesmen resistance made the Durand Line an artificial and redundant borderline. Disturbances, uprisings, violence continued to happen in one part or the other part of the tribal belt.

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[21] Misra, *The Administration of India*, 62.
[22] Ibid, 54.
[23] Stanley A. Wolpert, *Roots of Confrontation in South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and the Superpowers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 66.
[24] Cuthbert C. Davies, *The Problem of the North-West Frontier, 1890-1908, with a Survey of Policy Since 1849* (London: Curzon Press, 1975), 30.
[25] Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition & Memory in the North West Frontier* (UK: James Currey Publishers, 2000), 23.

Establishment of the North West Frontier Province (1901)

British continuous contact with the Frontier led them to the idea of creating a new Frontier Province. It was Lord Dalhousie who for the first time suggested to create the new province but he abandoned his proposal because Colonel Mackeson, who was to be entrusted with the job, was assassinated at Peshawar.[26] The architect of this policy of a frontier as a separate province, Lord Curzon, in his speech to the parliament in 1898 said that it was then clear to advance to the external Frontier, to take up a forward position on the line of Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar.[27] On becoming Viceroy of India he immediately turned his attention to the consolidation of the Frontier. He was of the opinion that relations with the tribes of the frontier should be dealt with directly and that it should be under the control and supervision of the Indian Government.[28] In the year 1901, he assessed the Frontier administrative structure by analyzing incidents on the border like the tribal uprising, strategic designs of the Russians and issue of the Durand Line.

The North West Frontier was established as a new province on November 9, 1901.[29] It was surrounded in the North and West by Afghanistan, in its East lies Kashmir, Gilgit, and the Punjab whereas on its South lies the Balochistan.[30] The tribal areas were beyond the provincial administrative structure. These areas became a buffer between Afghanistan and the British Administered districts. The first Chief Commissioner of the province was Lieutenant Colonel Harold Deane. He was succeeded by George Roose Keppel after his death in 1908.[31]

British Policy towards the North West Frontier of India

Policies of British administration were based on aggressive element of force and military expedition to subjugate the unruly tribes but with the element of non-involvement in the internal affairs of these tribes. The unique administrative and political system of these tribal areas make it distinguish from other regions. For the administrative purpose the British divided the tribal belt into different agencies. Agency was the counter part of the district

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[26] Lovat Fraser, *India Under Curzon & After* (London: William Heinemann, 1911), 58.
[27] Henry C. Lipsett, *Lord Curzon in India: 1898-1903* (London: R. A. Everett & Co, 1903), 32, https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1260&context=afghanenglish
[28] Sana Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011), 12-24.
[29] Lal Baha, *N.W.F.P. Administration Under British Rule 1901-1919* (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1978), 42-53.
[30] James W. Spain, "Pakistan's North West Frontier," *Middle East Journal* 8, no. 1 (1954): 27, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4322563.
[31] Fraser, *India Under Curzon,* 61.

which was an administrative unit in rest of the British India. Administrator of the agency was called a Political Agent who was parallel of Deputy Commissioner (DC), a district administrator. Political Agent was responsible to create cordial relations with the tribe of his jurisdiction and to serve as a middleman between the tribesmen and the Chief Commissioner later on the Governor. The British officials adopted policy of persuasion, pressure and armed intervention for controlling the tribesmen.[32] Before this system there was no proper setup or any special agency dealing with the tribal people.

With the establishment of the agencies a proper administrative setup developed whereby the British official had direct contact with the tribesmen. The system was not developed until 1876 when a special officer was appointed for Khyber Agency during the Second Anglo-Afghan war. Lord Robert in 1886 stated that if we want to strengthen our military position on the border then we have to improve our bond and connection with the tribes of the Frontier.[33] The tribal areas by the end of the 19th century after great upheaval were consolidated by the colonial power. The outcome of the appointment of Political Agents in the tribal areas during 1890s was that the British came to know about the problems of the tribesmen.[34]

Creation of tribal agencies and FRs brought the land of the tribesmen to be controlled by British India. With the special status of agencies these areas became an integral part of British India. The tribal zone of influence thus created, played the role of a buffer to the buffer. This buffer to the buffer was a great factor in the defense of the North West Frontier of India. A vacuum that was there in the shape of the tribal belt along the border with Afghanistan was thus filled. Objectives of the Empire in this region was summarized in the farewell speech by Lord Lansdowne delivered in Calcutta in 1894 by stating that in political geography nature abhors a vacuum. Under present circumstances if a vacuum is created that is if a place is left vacant on the Indian frontier, it certainly will be filled by others. Therefore, we should step in to fill such vacuum. He further stated that there is a special reason for which we cannot afford to observe a policy of mere abstention as regard the border region. He described the border region to be a sphere of influence of the Indian Empire within which no aggression from outside be allowed.[35] For British the primary objective in the region was to seek a frontier to defend India from the foreign aggression

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[32] Claude Rakisits, "Pakistan's Tribal Areas: A Critical No-Man's Land" (Paper presented at Webster University Forum, Geneva, April 25, 2008).

[33] Lord Montagu, "The North West Frontier of India," *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society* 11, no. 2 (1924): 139, DOI: 10.1080/03068372408724866.

[34] James G. Elliott, *The Frontier 1839-1947: The Story of The North-West Frontier of India* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1968), 91.

[35] Colvin Auckland, "The Problem Beyond the Indian Frontier," *Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 42, no. 250 (December 1897): 852.

of Russia and Afghanistan. Second objective was to secure the settled adjacent districts to the tribal land from the tribesmen incursion, and lastly to restrain the tribal territory to be used as a sanctuary by the criminals.

The Administrative Structure of the Tribes

The tribesmen for centuries were living in accordance to their own customs and traditions. Thus direct interference in the tribal land was not possible because of the expected violent reactions from the tribes. The British adopted the indirect form of rule for which they devised a hierarchical administrative system of their own. A small but highly authoritative system of administration was established to preserve and maintain peace in the tribal territory. Chief Commissioner, later on Governor, was at the top in the British hierarchical administrative setup. The tribal chief or *Malik* was at the lowest level whereas Political Agent was in the middle who acted as an administrator and mediator between the tribe and the high ups.

Political agents were the officers directly dealing with the tribes. Political Agent was vested with vast powers of administration. He was the central person in all this administrative set up. His role was identified as 'half ambassador and half governor'.[36] His successful administration was based on his personal relations and understanding with the clans and tribes. An essential duty of the political officer was to timely collect accurate information, which was a difficult task for the officer in a fractious tribal environment of the Frontier.

Local tribal people were recruited as Khassadars, tribal levies and tribal militias who assisted the Political Agent for policing the area. The paramilitary force, operated under the army, was to establish peace and security. Khassadars were recruited from the local tribesmen along with their own arms. Levies were appointed by the political administration on merit basis and were provided with arms and ammunition by the government. The tribal militia was a regular force recruited by the British Political administration for controlling the bordered areas along Afghanistan.

The British after encountering the tribal people realized that there should be someone with whom they could contact and who represent a specific clan or tribe. *Malaki* system was introduced in the tribal areas, where an elder or chief of the clan was bestowed with the title of *Malak* who would facilitate the political officer and who used to be a mediator between the government and his respective clan. The local tribal elders or chiefs were thus bestowed with a status to effectively play the role of a mediator between the colonial authorities and the members of his tribe and also to

[36] James W. Spain, *The Way of Pathans.* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1963), 24.

help in executing the policies of the government. The intension of introducing the system of *Malaks* was to generate loyal and responsible local elite. Their faithfulness was remunerated with monetary benefits and official acknowledgment of authority over the tribes. Along with *Malaki* system there is a *lungi* holder or *Sufaid resh*[37] which is a bottom rank of *Malak*.[38] British relationship with the tribes was secured by allowances paid to the tribes, known as *muwajjab*. In return for this system of allowance, the tribe made agreements to secure the routes passing through their areas and to abstain from raiding the British-India territory.[39] The British believed that paying allowance to the tribes was in their own interest as it would keep the tribes quiet.

Some of the British officials were against the role of the middleman. They believed that the government should directly deal with the tribes. Commissioner of the Derajat, W. K. Merk, was not in favour of the *Malaki* system. He proposed that instead of giving allowance to the selected *Malaks*, it should be paid to the tribe directly.[40] Lord Lytton also was of the opinion that the government direct links with the tribes would be much preferable for better understanding of their system and culture. He opposed the role of a *Malak*, middleman, Arbab in dealing with the tribes.[41] It was also believed that under the *Malaki* system an elite class in the tribal areas emerged in shape of *Malaks* which resulted in conflict, contradiction and dysfunction in the society.[42] Instead of all this opposition, the *Malaki* system worked well and better served the interests of the British government.

Law of the Land: The Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR)

The British encounter with *Pukhtuns* of this land compelled them to devise a special administrative set up and a set of laws. The law thus formulated for them was known as the Frontier Crimes Regulation, popularly known as FCR. To control and suppress the *Pukhtuns* of tribal region, the law was made much harsher by the British officials. It was not that new rules and regulations were made but rather the codification was

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[37] The *Lungi* system or the *Sufaid-Resh* (white beared elders) is also a sort of formal recognition although of a slightly lower level than the *Maliki* system. A *lungi* signifies the holding of a position of favour with the Government and of influence in the tribe with corresponding advantage to the Government and the individual.

[38] Salman Bangash, *The Frontier Tribal Belt: Genesis and Purpose Under the Raj* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23.

[39] Herman G. Watteville, *Waziristan, 1919-1920* (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1925), 8.

[40] Bangash, *The Frontier Tribal Belt*, 23.

[41] Lady B. Balfour, *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian administration, 1876 to 1880* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899), 166-7.

[42] Akbar S. Ahmad, *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society* (London: Routledge, 1980), 62.

done keeping in view of the tribal customs and traditions. It was first promulgated in Punjab as the Punjab Frontier Crimes Regulation in 1872 where NWF was part of the Punjab province at that time. In 1901 when NWFP was created as a separate province, these regulations were then promulgated as the FCR 1901.[43] The law dealt with both the civil and criminal cases and was different from the civil and criminal laws enforced in the rest of British India. FCR was not working as a parallel system but as a sole substitute code. FCR was to bridle the tribes of the borderland, to make secure the adjacent British controlled districts. At the time of its adoption in 1901, John William Kaye, head of the political and secret department of the India Office, commented, 'we cannot rein in wild horses with silken braids'.[44]

To make FCR acceptable to the tribesmen, the British attempted to blend it according to the tribals' customs and traditions by bringing *jarga* and traditional punishment into its sphere. The institution of *jarga* was included in FCR to give impression to the tribal people that the British highly regarded tribal sentiments. Most of the rulings of the Punjab bureaucrats, established in Punjab after 1849, were codified in 1901 in the fully developed FCR. All the powers of the executive, revenue collector and magistrate under FCR were held by a single person, the Deputy Commissioner (DC). In civil and criminal cases the DC could bypass the judicial obligations and rules of evidence and send the case to the officially appointed councils of elders, *jarga.* The *jarga* would look into the matter, determine facts and would give their decision on the matter and would report it to the British official responsible for awarding punishment. There was no right of appeal to any higher colonial court.[45] In case any tribal man committed crime and then absconded then under FCR's collective responsibility clause his village or tribe would be inflicted with punishment. Members of the community at hands would be arrested and trade and access to Peshawar or other plain towns were to be banned.[46] The British asserted that members of a tribe under segmentary lineage system were accountable for each other and therefore collective punishment was applied for the crimes committed by an individual member of a tribe. This notion of joint tribal responsibility was enshrined in the FCR.

There were some notorious articles regarding penalties in the FCR, like section 21 which was about the blockade of antagonistic or unfriendly

[43] Muhammad M. Wazir, "FATA Under FCR (Frontier Crimes Regulations): An Imperial Black Law," *Central Asia Journal* 61, no. 9 (2007): https://www.asc-centralasia.edu.pk/Issue_61/00-TOC.html.
[44] Bangash, *The Frontier Tribal Belt,* 230.
[45] Robert Nichols, *The Frontier Crimes Regulation: A History in Documents* (Pakistan: Oxford University Press., 2013), xiv.
[46] Ibid, xv.

tribe, section 31 about demolition or restriction of construction of hamlet, village or town in the Frontier, section 36 stating the removal of persons from their places of residence and section 40 which was the most notorious one was about the power of the Political Agent where he could arrest anybody with no right of appeal, keep a person in jail for unlimited time and can arrest any of his relative or tribe member in place of the accused.[47]

British enforcement of such harsh and special laws in the tribal belt was because of certain intrinsic objectives. The objectives were to extend her influence into the tribal areas, to implement her imperialist plans towards Central Asia and to contain Russian advancement towards India. FCR thus proved to achieve two way objective for the British administrators. On the one hand they tamed the tribal people who were not given the right of habeas corpus, whose arrest on mere suspicions were allowed, and where collective punishment for the whole tribe was authorized and where restrictions could be placed on the movements and activities of the tribes, and on the other hand the inherent objectives of implementing imperial designs could be achieved.

Conclusion

The tribal region of the NWF not only came under control of the British but the region also developed in the sector of transportation and communication for colonial purposes. By 1890 there were 571 miles of carpeted and uncarpeted imperial roads extending from Kohat, Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan. About 100 million rupees were spent during the years of 1884 and 1900 on extending the North Western railway line up to the tribal areas to open routes across the passes.[48] All this was done to expedite the military movements in times of crisis. British thus needed full domination of the region which was very much crucial for the defense of India.

The tribal administrative system was based on the extensive power of the Political Agents who were assisted by FCR, the *Malaki* system, the tribal levies and monetary incentives in shape of allowances. Besides this a chain of roads and railway lines was built to help in speedy movement of the troops in times of crisis to control the unruly tribes or to counter threats from beyond the border. Several expeditions were launched to subjugate these tribes. These tribes were contiguous to the settled districts of the then Punjab province which were the revenue generating districts. It was thus needed to be secured from the unruly tribes of the tribal belt. Tribes of the North West Frontier were of primary concern for the British of India. In 1849 when Punjab was annexed to the colonial government, relations of the British with the tribes of the North West were characterized by continuous strife. This led

[47] Bangash, *The Frontier Tribal Belt,* 230.
[48] Haroon, *Frontier of Faith,* 12.

the British officials to make agreements with the tribes. Objectives of the agreements were to safeguard the roads and preventing intrusion into the settled administered districts by the tribes. The tribal territory not only acted as a buffer but also as a defensive line between Afghanistan and British India.

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POTENTIAL ROLE OF REGIONAL PARTNERS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract:

The socio-economic situation of Afghanistan has been in shambles for almost two decades due to the U.S. invasion on the country. However, with the prospective end of this gruesome conflict, it is imperative to keep in sight and deliberate upon Afghanistan's socio-economic reconstruction which is a shared responsibility of regional countries. In this regard, it is needless to say that rebuilding of the country cannot be left alone to the cliffhanger of the interests and whims of the major world powers without regional support as was done in the aftermath of Soviet withdrawal in late 1980s. The U.S. influence in South and Central Asia is declining in present times and thereby it has become necessary to evaluate the potential role of all the important regional countries around Afghanistan to ensure the rising of an era of long-lasting stability in Afghanistan. In this context, the role of regional countries and organizations, who are the real stake holders in the peace and development of the post-conflict Afghanistan is of paramount importance and carries great potential. Regional cooperation among the regional states and regional organizations for enhancing connectivity, academic collaboration, trade activities and transport corridors through Afghanistan will naturally translate into the socio-economic reconstruction of the war torn country.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Economic Reconstruction, Socio-economic Development, Regional Integration, Trade, Connectivity

Introduction:

On 11 September 2001, the world had witnessed the most horrendous and deadliest terrorist attacks on the U.S soil, which resulted in

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thousands of people's death. In the aftermath of this terrorist attack came the watershed moment that altered the history of the world when the USA and its allies attacked Afghanistan on 7th October 2001. The hastily planned invasion proved to be one of the most disastrous, counterproductive, and costly military expeditions. The daunting outcomes were experienced by Afghanistan and put profound implications on regional security also. Presently, due to the changing dynamics of regional economic and security discourse, there is a dire need on the part of immediate neighbors of Afghanistan and other regional countries to consider reconstruction in many domains of Afghanistan.

In this aspect, to end the long war, Pakistan and many other regional countries are playing a significant role in bringing peace to the region. With the systematic withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Afghanistan and the peace efforts, on 29th February 2020 U.S and Taliban came into an agreement. The prospects for systematic socio-economic growth have started to emerge with the peace deal. Many countries in the region like China, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and prominent Central Asian states have started to weigh in on assimilating the Afghan government and people in the region's political and socio-economic activities.

Afghanistan, despite being landlocked, is at the crossroad of the Ancient Silk Route that connects East and West via land route. The route is still relevant and efficacious for expediting trade and commercial activities to foster regional integration and economic growth. Trade via the Afghan route can pave the way for sustainable economic development, increase job opportunities, create an efficient workforce, enhance people to people contacts and establish multiple options for future regional integration. This particular work attempts to discuss and analyze the most important requirements of socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan, to highlight the decisive role of regional countries in the post-conflict, socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan and to identify the prospects of regional integration and stability in the region via Afghanistan.

Significance and Novelty of the Study

This research explores the major requirements for the socio-economic reconstructing of Afghanistan and the potential role of regional partners and major stakeholders in facilitating the peace process and contributing to socio-economic development of Afghanistan through enhanced connectivity making Afghanistan a linking hub between Central and South Asia. This research also focuses on future cooperation among regional partners to enhance trade activities and people to people connections. This study will contribute further to the policy implementation process and highlight various patterns of cooperation among regional powers.

Research Methodology

The research approach used in the study is Deductive (top-down approach). This research is analytical as it based on content analysis and evaluation. The study is also descriptive and exploratory in nature because efforts have been made to describe and explore the potential role of regional powers and prospects for cooperation in the post-conflict Afghan situation. The sources of data collection are both primary and secondary. The primary sources used in this study are the diplomatic speeches, official sites, official reports and official statistic reports etc. The secondary sources are based on the relevant data collected from published research papers, magazines, articles, journals, newspaper editorials, and other authentic online sources. Thus through a descriptive-analytical approach the paper aims to answer three important questions such as what are the requirements for socio-economic reconstruction in Afghanistan? How best the regional states can play their roles in the post-conflict socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan? and how can prospects of regional integration be further enhanced to bring peace in the region and make Afghanistan a regional transit trade hub?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this research can be best explained by the "complex interdependence" theory. The leading proponents of this theory were Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. The term 'interdependence' is frequently used in today global arena. It is a situation where states and all actors involved are associated and depended upon each other. Generally, dependence means a state of being determined or significantly affected by external forces. Interdependence, most simply defined, means mutual dependence.[1] In world politics, interdependence refers to conditions based on correlative impacts among actors or states. According to the authors, interdependence should not be defined entirely as situations of evenly balanced mutual dependence. However, in mutual dependence, the dynamics of relationship are different between the actors involved. The nature of the relation is amid states and other transnational actors. It is characterized by both cooperation and competition. In interdependence, there are costly reciprocal effects of transaction among the actors. One's actors' policies and actions have profound impacts on the policies and actions of the other actors and vice versa.

Under this theory, regional cooperation is significant at the multilateral level. The states cooperate even in the changing dynamics of regional or

[1] Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, "*Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition",* University of Wisconsin Press, 32(2) (Spring, 1978): 513-530.

global political and economic affairs. In this regard, the significant regional countries i.e., Pakistan, China, Russia and other Central Asian states, are the stakeholders in Afghan peace process. Furthermore, it is vital to understand that Afghanistan is the main trade route and transit hub between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs). Therefore, the peace and stability of the country would have ripple effects on the adjacent states. In present times, states are more inclined towards enhancing soft power tools. The world is no longer unilateral and it has become more multilateral. The multiplex world order calls for resolving global challenges with collective efforts and it is pertinent to jointly work for peace with development in the regional security discourse. Thus the complex or regional interdependence provides a positive sum-game for all parties involved leading to a win win situation.

Socio-Economic Reconstruction of Afghanistan: An Analysis of Requirements

Before discussing the role of regional partners in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, it is important to understand the guiding principles on which the reconstruction should be carried out. Following are some of the significant elements need to be taken into account in this regard.

a. Extensive Planning:

The regional countries adjacent to Afghanistan need to build unified, integrated and coordinated planning for the ongoing post-conflict reconstruction programs. The findings of these ongoing and future assessments will provide the needed impetus for an essential analytical baseline for prioritizing and enhancing cooperation between important regional players. In this aspect, increasing the involvement of Afghan people in such planning is essential.

b. Coordination:

The degree of coordination between the Afghanistan, the international community and particularly the regional countries and immediate neighbors of Afghanistan is likely to determine the involvement in different actions. The essential countries and organizations in this region have coordinated many meetings and plans for this purpose bilaterally, multilaterally and under the umbrella of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Economic Cooperation Organisation and Central Asian Economic Cooperation (CAREC). In this aspect the hard infrastructure projects involving Afghanistan need to be prioritized for accelerated implementation and the consultative meetings should be continued for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Furthermore, such activities which are detrimental to the peace process can be thwarted by consistent consultations and collaborations between the stakeholders vis-à-vis regional connectivity.

c. Training of Afghans: Capacity Building

Since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, many Afghan professionals have either left the country; have been killed or silenced by their theocratic militant captors. The brain drain has almost paralyzed the country. Because of these circumstances, the local Afghan people must be trained by important regional countries in this region. The technical training and assistance should be based on modern technical and scientific footings to fill the contentious void that is hindering the reconstruction of their country. Capacity building is important to strengthen the institutions of Afghanistan in almost all the sectors of socio-economic life.

d. Funding:

The World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Asian Development Bank put the estimated future cost and accelerate implementation of infrastructure projects keeping the immediate neighbors of Afghanistan on board. The amount of non-security and non-humanitarian related needs over the next decade would be approximately $15 billion. As per the other estimation, the range could be high up to $25 billion.[2] In this context, effective coordination for meeting these monetary requirements should also be part of regional countries' agenda and must contribute as per their capacities.

Potential Role of Regional Partners in Reconstruction of Afghanistan:

Pakistan:

Due to the poor conditions of social sectors in Afghanistan, its medical and education infrastructure and facilities have been shrinking rampantly during the past couple of decades. As an immediate neighbor, Pakistan always help and support the Afghan government and people with socio-economic reconstruction plans and trade activities. Such assistance help the Afghan government and people and also enable Pakistan to amicably repatriate huge number of Afghan refugees living in its jurisdiction for more than 40 years now. Furthermore, the continued cooperation and facilitation would also help bring peace in the regional political discourse and enhance integration among the countries. Pakistan has been playing a pivotal role in the socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. The government has been supporting the Afghan government in building resilience and increasing cooperation in multiple sectors. The sectors include communication, economy, education, health, etc.

[2] "Post-Conflict Reconstruction." web.stanford.edu. Post-Conflict Reconstruction, n.d. Accessed March 9, 2021. https://web.stanford.edu/class/intnlrel193/readings/week6/afghan.html

In recent times, military means are subdued because of enhance use of soft power. The avenues of soft power projection are gaining grounds. The states are more inclined towards projecting soft power avenues for cooperation. In this aspect, Pakistan's soft power policy has a primary objective to bring peace, regional cooperation and facilitate establishing a vibrant civil society in Afghanistan. This cooperation will pave the way for rooting out many issues including extremism, militancy and terrorism. After the U.S withdrawal from this country, increased cooperation will also change the nature of Pak-Afghan relations. Owing to these benefits of soft power, Pakistan has perused strategies of cooperation and has significantly invested in capacity building and technical training programs in Afghanistan. It has pledged to continue doing so in the future.[3]

China:

China, as immediate neighbor of Afghanistan, has an important role to play in the socio-economic development of post US Afghanistan as it has concrete plans for regional and global integration such as BRI. During the last few years, China has approached its neighboring countries and has sought to consolidate friendly relations to promote regionalism through the policies of sustainable development leading to encompassing socio-economic improvement. The visionary incumbent Chinese President, Mr. Xi Jinping is an advocate of positive global and regional engagement. The grand vision of global alliance would subsequently contribute towards Chinese ascendancy. It is pursuing the long-term objectives of building a community with a shared future for shared prosperity.

Keeping these assertions in mind, it is no surprise that successive Chinese governments have reiterated plans to take Afghanistan as a strategic partner in their quest for expanding the socio-economic interests in the region and beyond. The visionary leadership has reiterated its commitment to bring peace, stability, and economic prosperity to Afghanistan through investment. The Chinese president has emphatically reiterated his speeches for "A new era of cooperation in China-Afghanistan relations to take development to a new depth and breadth". [4]

Afghanistan has answered positively and has backed the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The country undoubtedly lies in the center of regional and global trade. The Afghan government officials have persistently met Chinese government officials for seeking effective investments and engagement initiatives for its economic development. China has signed

[3] Alamgir Khan and Muhammad Hanif. "Pakistan's Role in the Social Reconstruction of Afghanistan in the Post 9/11 Era." *Central Asia Journal* 85, (Peshawar: Area study Centre, 2019): 81–82. https://www.asc-centralasia.edu.pk/index.php/ca/article/view/12/9

[4] Ibid 3

various deals of over $7 billion for the next 25 years. The sector includes oil, gas, and minerals exploration. In this regard, a substantial number of Chinese companies are working in various sectors and regions of Afghanistan

Russia:

Russia is also one of the real stakeholders in peace and development of Afghanistan due to a number of reasons such as drugs/narcotics, Central Asian security and investment in connectivity projects etc. For many years, Russia has been actively pursuing to expand its investments in Afghanistan for its socio-economic development and rebranding its image in the state.[5] The connection between Russia's economic development initiatives and its soft power pursuits in the region is revealed most compellingly by its increased role in assisting Afghanistan's infrastructure development. The profitability of Russian investments for Afghanistan's socio-economic developments is certain. The Russian initiatives for reconstructing Afghanistan by facilitating new projects and reviving the previous ones have asserted its efficacy for socio-economic development as Russia has always shown interests to contribute to the transport, energy and electricity projects integrating Central and South Asia via Afghanistan.

In 2014, the government of Russia has enlisted 140 projects of Soviet-era that hoped to rehabilitate Afghanistan's future. Due to these and other such projects, the tide has slowly started to turn in socio-economic development of Afghanistan. Many Afghan government officials have accepted Russia's positive role in their country's rebuilding during the recent years.[6] Presently, Russia is eager to keep Afghanistan stable in the aftermath of U.S withdrawal. In this regard, it can be anticipated that Russia will renew its investment and commitment to ensure sustainable economic development of Afghanistan to enable the country to eliminate dependence on drugs.[7]

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[5] Samuel Ramani, "Russia's Soft Power Push in Afghanistan." thediplomat.com. The Diplomat, (January 13, 2018). https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/russias-soft-power-push-in-afghanistan/

[6] Kevin Sieff, "Russia Hopes Infrastructure Projects Will Build Bridges in Afghanistan." theguardian.com. *The Guardian*, (April 7, 2014). https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/07/russia-afghanistan-investment-kabul-karzai

[7] Nurlan Aliyev, "How Russia Views Afghanistan Today." warontherocks.com. War on the Rocks, (October 19, 2020). https://warontherocks.com/2020/10/russias-contemporary-afghan-policy/

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country and it has a virtue of having Islam's two holiest sites on its territory among many other religious honors. The prestigious influence combined with its wealth and resources proved instrumental in turning the tide of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The influence thus formed is still present in one form or another in Afghanistan. After the American invasion of Afghanistan, the country supported the American-backed Afghan government and provided economic assistance.[8] It is expected that Saudi Arabia will play its role in the stabilization of the Afghanistan situation because of its regional and socio-economic responsibilities as a dominant religious and economic state in the region. Importantly it has the financial capacity to play an important role in socio-economic development of Afghanistan.

United Arab Emirates (UAE):

Government of the UAE has also played an intrinsic role in the civil construction and infrastructure development of Afghanistan during recent times. The assistance was done through the implementation of various projects, for example, the construction of the Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan housing project.[9] As for the future of Afghanistan, UAE has pledged to keep its political and socio-economic assistance to the war-torn country in the decades to come with other regional stakeholders' help.[10]

Turkey:

Turkey has been a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for a long time. However, its presence in the military alliance has never been detrimental to the Afghan people or their interest. The country has provided ample socio-economic assistance to Afghanistan during the past two decades and has kept friendly relations with various Afghan factions. Consequently, the people of Afghanistan also consider Turkey as a true friend.

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[8] Sayed Salahuddin, "Afghans Welcome Saudi Assistance." arabnews.com. *Arab News*, (May 8, 2019). https://www.arabnews.com/node/1494196/world

[9] *The UAE Aid to Afghanistan in (Construction and Civil Development) Sector*. mofaic.gov.ae. (UAE Embassy in Kabul, January 18, 2021). https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/missions/kabul/media-hub/image-gallery/the-uae-aid-to-afghanistan-in-construction-and-civil-development-sector

[10] Guido Steinberg and Nils Woermer. "Exploring Iran & Saudi Arabia's Interests in Afghanistan & Pakistan: Stakeholders or Spoilers - A Zero Sum Game? Part 1: Saudi Arabia." *Sources of Tension in Afghanistan and Pakistan: A Regional Perspective* , (April 2013, 10) https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/175079/APRIL_2013_GUIDO%20STEINBERG&NILS_WOERMER.pdf

In 2018, seventy six Turkish companies were working in Afghanistan. Ninety percent (90%) of these companies played a significant role in the construction sector and completed more than 700 projects from 2003 to 2018.[11] In 2019, Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board signed a deal on cooperation and information sharing with Afghanistan's National Procurement Authority. This deal aims to enhance the trade volume of 150 million U.S dollars between both countries in the years to come.[12] Under these assertions, it is no surprise that the new US administration has recently shown its interest in asking Turkey to host a meeting of high-level between officials of Taliban and Afghans for finalizing the peace agreement between these parties. This initiative sheds ample light on the leverage and influence that Turkey can bring to the table by working with key power brokers both inside and outside the incumbent Afghan government.[13] The Pakistan-Afghanistan-Turkey trilateral cooperation process has proved to be instrumental in this regard. This platform has been used for furthering the socio-economic interests of these three countries for a long time now. It has the potential to play its role in uplifting Afghanistan's society and economy in the aftermath of U.S withdrawal.

Iran:

Iran, like many other regional countries has its own significant political and converging socio-economic interests in Afghanistan. Until now, it has provided $500 million to Kabul for its reconstruction. It is one of most significant trading and investment partners of Afghanistan. The experts believe that many economic projects have proved to be instrumental for reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Even though Iranian policies regarding this region and especially Afghanistan have been at loggerheads with the American policies on most regional issues, Iran is expected to have a more proactive approach for socio-cultural and political reconstruction.[14]

Moreover, access to Iran's transportation infrastructure can also provide ample socio-economic dividends to land-locked Afghanistan. China's multi-

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[11] *Turkey-Afghanistan Economic and Trade Relations*." mfa.gov.tr. Republic of Turkey (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.) Accessed March 19, 2021. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-afghanistan.en.mfa

[12] Gokhan Ergocun. *Turkey, Afghanistan Sign Cooperation Agreement*. (aa.com.tr. Anadolu Ajansı, December 6, 2019). https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/turkey-afghanistan-sign-cooperation-agreement/1666012

[13] Menekse Tokyay', "Turkey Likely to Host Afghan Peace Meeting." arabnews.com. *Arab news*, (March 8, 2021). https://www.arabnews.com/node/1822046/middle-east

[14] Alireza Nader, Idrees Ahmad Rahmani, Robert Stewart, Ali G. Scotten and Leila Mahnad. "Conclusion and Implications for the United States." Essay. In *Iran's Influence in Afghanistan; Implications for the U.S. Drawdown*, 46. (Washington DC, USA: RAND Corporation, 2014) https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR616.html

billion-dollar investment initiatives can also play a decisive role in enhancing connectivity between Afghanistan and Iran. It can provide various employment and socio-economic initiatives for people of both countries.[15]

Uzbekistan:

Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has played a dynamic role in supporting the cause of Afghanistan's socio-economic reconstruction during recent years. Uzbekistan has accomplished Termiz-Mizar-e-Sharif Railway and also providing electricity to Afghanistan. Uzbekistan-Afghanistan and Pakistan recently signed an agreement to extend this Termiz-Mizar-e-Sharif railway to Peshawar which will be instrumental in bringing socio-economic development to Afghanistan. It will also be a milestone in connecting Central Asia with Pakistan via Afghanistan. With the establishment of the bilateral relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan and raising Afghan interests in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the prospects of cooperation are high between both the nations which also aim to enhance regional connectivity. In a recent speech at the SCO videoconference summit, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said:

> ***"……..we are in favor of the soonest possible elaboration and adoption of a plan of practical actions to assist the social and economic reconstruction of Afghanistan within the framework of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group. New prospects for all SCO countries are opening up through the initiatives of transport corridors that would help restore Afghanistan to its historic role as a bridge connecting the Central and South Asia."***[16]

Moreover, the share of Uzbekistan trade in Afghanistan's foreign trade has grown to 7.4% in recent years, while Afghanistan's share has gone up to 1.5%. According to the Uzbekistan's incumbent leadership, there is still a huge unused economic potential between both countries that will be explored in the near future. Furthermore, to fill the existing void, it has been targeted that the indicators of mutual trade between both countries should be increased up to two billion dollars by 2023. The adoption of such plans has already begun. The trading houses and free trade zones in Afghanistan are being constructed by the use of modern technologies.[17]

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[15] Inayat Ur Rehman Saqeb, "Iran's Balanced Role in Afghanistan." moderndiplomacy.eu. *Modern Diplomacy*, (September 12, 2020). https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/09/14/irans-balanced-role-in-afghanistan/

[16] *President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's Speech* at the SCO Videoconference Summit." president.uz. Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президенти, (November 10, 2020). https://president.uz/en/lists/view/3936

[17] "Why Is It Important to Involve Afghanistan in the Central Asian Economy?" uzbekembassy.com.my. Why is it important to involve Afghanistan in the Central Asian economy? (Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Malaysia, February 19, 2021).

Kazakhstan:

Kazakhstan has been providing long-term support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan for a long time now. The mutual trade between both countries has increased exponentially during the last few years. Moreover, it has also fulfilled its international pledge of economic assistance to Afghanistan in the meantime. [18]The prestigious Bolashak education program has trained more than 1,000 Afghan students in Kazakh Universities. Among other such initiatives, it has been noticed that the country has provided more than $80 million of financial assistance to Afghanistan through its foreign aid agency KazAID. The majority of the foreign aid budget of Kazakhstan has gone to Afghanistan, focusing on multiple fields. For example, infrastructure development, humanitarian aid, and facilitate gender equality initiatives.[19] Other Central Asia Republics (CARs) will also have their sizeable part in Afghanistan's socio-economic rehabilitation in the decades to come.

Role of Regional Organizations for Socio-Economic Growth in Afghanistan: An Overview

The abovementioned prominent regional countries have played a great role in ensuring sustainable socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. However, the role of regional organizations in ensuring socio-economic development has great significance and cannot be overlooked. Over the past decades, many regional organizations have been established to improve the socio-economic situation in Asia. With enhanced cooperation and better-planned initiatives by organizations, many milestones have been achieved. These platforms have allowed all giant and small Asian countries to contribute to this region's development cohesively.

The ***Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)*** plays a crucial role in providing a realistic approach and execution to achieve smooth socio-economic growth in Afghanistan. The SCO member countries always had a unanimous belief that peace cannot be achieved in Afghanistan through military action, and negotiations are the only solution for the cessation of hostilities. After supporting and welcoming the peace negotiations and

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https://uzbekembassy.com.my/eng/news_press/economy/why_is_it_important_to_involve_afghanistan_in_the_central_asian_economy.html

[18] Zhanna Akhmetova, "Kazakhstan's Assistance to Afghanistan Helps Strengthen Regional and Global Security, Diplomat Says." *The Astana Times*,(September 25, 2018.) https://astanatimes.com/2018/09/kazakhstans-assistance-to-afghanistan-helps-strengthen-regional-and-global-security-diplomat-says/

[19] Adam Gallagher, "Afghanistan: Can Central Asia Help Spur Peace with the Taliban?" usip.org. (United States Institute of Peace, July 28, 2020). https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/07/afghanistan-can-central-asia-help-spur-peace-taliban

agreement between the USA and the Taliban,[20] SCO is now ready to provide much-needed financial help to the Afghan people. [21]

During recent years, the SCO-affiliated countries have coordinated in strategizing development for the BRI initiative's joint building. It targets to construct pervasive connectivity networks of trade and infrastructure development from Asia to Europe-Africa and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes passing through Afghanistan. Moreover, these member countries have also signed the accord on facilitation of International Road Transport. The transportation line of 9,300 kilometers has a great potential to connect Afghanistan with other countries of the region. [22]

The World Bank has also played an instrumental role in Afghanistan's socio-economic development so far and has committed itself to more than 4.7 billion U.S dollars for development projects in the war-ravaged country. The World Bank has contributed to energy and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan in a big way. Moreover, it has also administered and kept a check on Afghanistan's reconstruction trust fund that has amassed more than 12.27 billion U.S dollars as of 1st October 2020. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, World Bank has pledged to support Afghanistan's economic stability with other development partners involved in reconstruction in the country. The decline in these grants can threaten the already fragile socio-economic structure and prospects for future development. And can prove to be detrimental to the region as well.[23]

Asian Development Bank **(ADB**), which is run with the combined efforts and monetary assistance of Asian countries, has also prioritized analyzing and support Afghanistan's growth. As a country affected by conflict, Afghanistan has been classified as a Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations (FCAS) country by ADB.[24] There are many challenges that can change the geo-economic and geopolitical scenarios and therefore an integrated policy framework is pertinent to be established in this regard. India has done much to defunct and sabotages **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation** (SAARC). However, other partner states in the association can

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[20]上海合作组织Шанхайская Организация Сотрудничества *The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*. SCO, (September 16, 2020). http://eng.sectsco.org/news/20200916/677178.html

[21] Warikoo, K, *The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Afghanistan / SCO Shanghai Cooperation Organization,* (InfoSCO, April 26, 2019). http://infoshos.ru/en/?idn=21303

[22] "How Does SCO Bring Afghanistan 'Closer to Peace'?" *CGTN* (June 11, 2019). https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d514d3255544d35457a6333566d54/index.html

[23] *The World Bank in Afghanistan,* World Bank, (October 1, 2020). https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview

[24] Elmer. *Afghanistan and ADB*. (Asian Development Bank, March 5, 2021). https://www.adb.org/countries/afghanistan/main

join hands to incorporate Afghanistan into their ambit to provide wide-ranging economic benefits and incentives in the fields of trade and commerce.

Conclusion:

For more than forty years, the Afghan people have endured dreadful wars, deaths and destruction. With the end of these calamities nearing, every regional state must play its role in Afghanistan's socio-economic reconstruction while ensuring that the regional spoilers working to sabotage these optimistic initiatives are under control. The USA is eager to withdraw its military forces from this region in the coming months. In this regard, it will require support from regional countries to keep Afghanistan's long-term stability intact. Under such circumstances, all the leading regional players must form a prudent and systematic policy structure for Afghanistan's reconstruction. The regional cooperation, peace, harmony and stability in the state will have ripple effects. The best strategy is to develop hard infrastructure through Afghanistan as there are already plans under Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) and Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) for roads and highways. Likewise software i.e. harmonization and coordination of policies for smooth regional trade via Afghanistan is also imperative. It will pave the way for the immense socio-economic development to witness the rise of a new dawn of prosperity in the decades to come. For achieving these goals, all regional countries must strive hard to provide monetary and technical assistance and make sure that the Afghan diaspora is allowed to come back in a dignified and peaceful manner in order to play role in re-building their country and making post-US Afghanistan more prosperous.

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FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR STRATEGIC SHIFT IN PAKISTAN'S POST 9/11 AFGHAN POLICY

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Abstract

This paper explores the factors responsible for compelling Pakistan to support the 'Operation Enduring Freedom 'led by the USA and its Allies in Afghanistan in 2001.The goals behind this operation were to dismantle the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization in Afghanistan. When the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1996, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, were the only states who recognized their government in Afghanistan. Pakistan considers Taliban as a strategic asset for obtaining its objectives in Afghanistan. Regional and extra-regional powers such as, the India, US, Russia, Iran supported their client groups in support of their own national interest, in Afghanistan. However, keeping in view the US-India strategic partnership in the region, Pakistan changed its foreign policy, and supported the Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. This change of policy brought up economic and political, and security challenges for Pakistan. Terrorist activities, suicide killings, and bomb blasts hit the society. Since then, its security is in doldrums. The paper argues that serious internal and external security factors compelled Pakistan to change its policy towards Afghanistan in 2001.

Keywords: Operation Enduring Freedom, war on terror, foreign policy, security, national interest.

Introduction

Pakistan after 11th September, 2001 changed its policy of supporting Taliban Government in Afghanistan and joined US led Global War against Terror in Afghanistan. US military action in Afghanistan started in October

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2001; this operation pushed the militants and operatives of Al-Qaida from Afghanistan into Pakistan's Tribal Areas. Thus, turning it into a safe sanctuary for foreign militants, in addition provided base for Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban, these militants used the porous Pak-Afghan border to attack US and Western forces in Afghanistan. Moreover, US gave the status of a "major non-NATO ally" for Pakistan's important role in supporting US forces to get hold of Al-Qaida and its supporters. India subsequently took advantage of situation and became a major pawn in Afghanistan through investing and rebuilding projects and started growing its economic and political influence in Afghanistan. Pakistan's post 9/11 Afghan policy is designed to protect Pakistan from any external threat and supported Afghanistan politically, financially and hosted millions of Afghan refugees. Despite these efforts, distrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan kept increasing, furthermore, excessive Indian presence in Afghanistan was a major strategic defeat for Pakistan. It gave rise to security threat perception of Pakistan in its neighborhood which it always wanted to counter.

USA launched War against Terrorism in Afghanistan with the approval of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1368 and support of her allies on October 07, 2001[1].Following the shift in the regional and international environment, Pakistan adapted to reverse its pro-Taliban policy in favor of US-led Global War on Terror[2].

Moreover, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1368 made Pakistan legally bound to support action against Taliban in Afghanistan; consequently, it influenced Pakistan's Afghan policy.

Pakistan's Policy makers were certain that assistance to US in GWOT against Al-Qaida and Taliban will pave way for having friendly Afghan government which would help Pakistan achieve its objective of countering India's hegemonic plans in Afghanistan[3]. Pakistani policy makers also believed that Pakistan is facing internal threat from extremism, economic, sectarian and external threats particularly from India[4]. Therefore; the decision makers of Pakistan decided to stand with US after 9/11 and justified

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[1] Hasan Askari Rizvi, *Pakistan's Foreign policy: The Dynamics of Change*. (The Nation. September 26, 2001).

[2] Sohail Mehmood, *The Strategic Dialogue between Reluctant Allies: The United States and Pakistan Today*. (Counter Currents. Org. 2002). http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/thestrategic-dialogue-between - Reluctant -Allies- The- United- States – Pakistan- Today

[3] Qandeel Siddique, *Pakistan's Future Policy towards Afghanistan a look at Strategic Depth, Militant Movements and the Role of India and the US.* (Danish Institute For International Studies Report. Copenhagen. 2011).

[4] Aarish Ullah Khan., *The Terrorist Threat and the Policy Response in Pakistan*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (Paper No. 11 September 2005 :16-19).

it as "National Interest"[5]. This paper looks into the factors which compelled Pakistan to ally with US in Global War against Terrorism and the National interests it wanted to achieve at that time.

Theoretical Framework

Pakistan and United States relations are always dubbed as marriage of convenience for the US since Pakistan has always been used by the former to realize its objective in South Asia either it is rolling back the Soviet influence in the region or attacking Afghanis tan to eliminate militancy. The incident of 9/11 has not only created havoc in United States but Pakistan is still facing the offshoots of this tragic episode. It was this incident that revived the reluctant romance between the two traditional allies. Yet it was the geographical factor again that brought misfortune for Pakistan.

The incident of 9/11 altered the entire foreign policy of United States as elimination of militant and militancy became the prime concern of Bush doctrine. Bush in one of his statement said, 'now we have admitted the fact that our boundaries have become accessible and the worst attack can come from the state/group having WMDs''. In coherence with the realist paradigm of using power to secure national interest, US vice president announced Bush's doctrine to deal with terrorism iron handedly. He determined that US will lead the world in this war on the ground that US owes this position because of its economic and military might.

Bush's policy shift ought to be founded on observing the circumstantial evidence and the challenges he was confronting and was required to take policy decisions. Expecting the leader acts in a sensible way, one can predict the rationale behind the decision made. Referencing history, we can scrutinize the means taken by past statesmen. Realism expect "that statesmen think and act in the context of state's interest spells out as power, and the testimony of history unearth this assumption"[6].

Human instinct never shows signs of change. In a generally cited quote of George Santayana, the individuals who can't recall the past are condemned to repeat it. Morgenthau states 'review and foresee,' by which he implies, examine "the footstep of a statesman – past, present, or future – has happened or will happen in world politics. Giving due consideration to this

[5] Kuniharu Kakihara, *The Post-9/11 Paradigm Shift and its Effects on East Asia*, (Japan: Institute for International Policy Studies, 292E, January 2003)

[6] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace.* 6th ed. (New York. Alfred A. Knopf, 1985): 5.

statement, Bush while carefully analyzing the policy decisions made by the US leadership in the past, concluded that US by developing cordial relations with the major stakeholders will target the terrorists and will preserve the world peace. The basic idea behind this policy was to oversee the world through its matchless economic and military might[7].

To implement his policy and to teach a lesson to the terrorists, the US once again relied on the territory of Pakistan to use it as a launching pad to attack Afghanistan. On the other side, Pakistan politically and economically was passing through transition owing to the October 1999 military coup. The US offer to Pakistan "either you are with us or with the enemies," put Pakistan in catastrophic situation. However, US inflicted sanction on Pakistan and the persistent factor of India, converged Pakistan interest with that of the US and again Pakistan become ally of the US.

In global politics for survival, states purse to wield power, have self-defense and secure their national interest. Additionally, there is no central authority that could regulate the conduct of states. Therefore, in this anarchical world wielding power and strengthening self-defense apparatus becomes indispensable for the states [8] .Keeping in mind its politico-economic vulnerabilities and significance of its geo-strategic importance for regional and extra-regional powers it is essential for a state like Pakistan to acquire power. To the realists it is the anarchical system that led to the struggle for power and formation of alliances among the states with converging interests[9].The US-Pak alliance is the perfect description of this fact where the interests of both the states converged and they entered into alliance in 1950s, during Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and now in war against terrorism.

Nonetheless, criticizing the global system, many states for self-preservation seek power and adopt contentious policies. Consequently, realist theorists build their arguments in the light of power and international anarchical system. "Realism," or the term interchangeably used by Henry Kissinger in his book Diplomacy, "Realpolitik – an approach dependent on computations

[7] National Security Strategy of the United States, NSS 2002 available at www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf. see also, George Bush remarks at (Houston, June 14, 2002) retrieved from www.whitehouse.gov/news/ releases/2002/ 06/20020614-8.html

[8] Korab Karpowicz, W. Julian. *Political Realism in International Relations*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (Summer Edition 2017), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/realism-intl-relations.

[9] John Mearsheimer., *Structural Realism, in International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. 3rd ed, (Oxford University Press.2013).

of power and the national interest,"[10] is tied in with achieving and keeping up national interests through the use of national power.

Realism being a dominant school of thought in international relations accentuates inevitable clout of the existing forces and underscores that acting like rational being states should adjust and readjust it according to the evolving conditions. However, the most important question of these popular discourses is that why states seek power? In this regard the classical realist Morgenthau reveals to us that human instinct has not changed in centuries that have gone since the established thinkers of the antiquated times observed them and wrote about them. On this issue, Thucydides caught the quintessence of human instinct when he expressed, "to see distinctly the events that occurred before and which (human instinct being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much a similar way, be repeated in the future"[11]. Hans J. Morgenthau emphasizing the Thucydides viewpoint that it is human instincts that orchestrate all the laws of politics.[12]

However, Neo-realists (also known as Structural Realists) part their ways from classical realists on the point that it is the structure of international system rather than human nature that forces the states to struggle for power and self-help. To structural realists' structure of international system and not the policies of the state, is the architect of power politics. To them behavior of the state is dependent on the structure of international system.[13]

However, the structural realists split up on the question that whether states struggle for power just for self-preservation and self-help or they pursue hegemony. As the relative power of some of the states are unbridled, thus leading to uncertainty and sense of insecurity of the weak states. This uncertain and insecure environment provides a reasonable claim to the weaker states to acquire power to coexist with the mighty states.

A further divide is found in structural realism (offensive and defensive). The defensive realists echoed the thoughts of Kenneth Waltz while the offensive realists echoed the thoughts of John Mearsheimer. To defensive realists it is the anarchical international system that forces states to increase their relative power which make it indispensable for the states to get involved in self-help apparatus. However, in their view point perusal of hegemony seems to be

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[10] Henry Kissinger , *Diplomacy*, (New York : Touchstone,1994): 137

[11] Thucydides. (translated by Warner), *History of the Peloponnesian War*, (London: Penguin, 1972):48

[12] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace.* 6th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985): 4.

[13] Joseph K. Clifton. *Disputed Theory and Security Policy: Responding to the Rise of China*, (Claremont McKenna College, 2011).

disproportionate for any state. They hold that states should not struggle for power rather they should seek what in Kenneth Waltz view is "appropriate amount of power"[14]. Defensive realists contend that attempt from any state to pursue hegemony leads to balancing. Consequently, formation of military alliances against the hegemon becomes inevitable that further creates uncertainty and insecurity[15]. Nonetheless, the weak states are primarily concerned with balancing their standing in global politics rather than increasing their relative power[16]. However, in the presence of destructive military equipment the stronger states do not enter into direct military conflict rather they pursue their objectives through proxies.

To Loveman, the idea of proxy wars can be best understood by developing understanding principles of realism keeping in view the paradigm shifts in world system and knowing the hazardous of entering into direct military faceoff[17]. Analyzing the assumptions of realism Loveman holds a view that realism oversights the corrosion of the idea of state's power and parallel increase in interdependence; a changeover from global system to global society; and non-acceptance of war owing to risk involvement[18]. States are shun to use power not because they are supposed to act so but because of the modern military tools and weapons that assures shared destruction, states cannot go to maximize their security options by entering into state-to-state conflicts. The Cold War can be exemplified in support of this argument. The US and USSR ineptitude to get benefits of maximizing security arrangements that have chances of mutual destruction led to the growth of proxies in Middle East, Korea and Southeast Asia

After the tragic episode of 9/11, the president of US declaring the vulnerability of its boundaries against any possible terrorist attack signifies that US is engaged in balancing its position in Asia and again bringing Pakistan under its framework of security. On the other side, Pakistan to secure its boundaries joined US led war on terror to enhance her security mechanism. As the defensive realist, explaining the features of alliances where the primary concern of one state is to balance its position against the opponent while the object of the other state is to enhance its security through the formation of alliances[19].

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[14] John H. Herz. Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma, *World Politics*, 2 (02).(1950):157-180.

[15] Kenneth Waltz. *The Origin of War in Neorealist Theory.* In The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1989)

[16] Sutch Peter and Elias Juanita, *The Basic International Relations*, (Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007)

[17] Chris Loveman, Assessing the Phenomenon of Proxy Intervention, *Conflict, Security & Development* 2 (3), (2002):29-48

[18] Ibid:36

[19] Weitsman Patricia, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponent of Peace, Weapons of War* . (California: Stanford University Press, 2004)

Unlike defensive realists, offensive realists give gloomy picture of the international anarchy. They argue that anarchy in international system is Hobbesian in nature and powers of the states are unchecked. However, bi-polar system and nuclear deterrence provides some sort of restraining power. Hence, many states for self-preservation try to enhance their relative power within the given mechanism of power configuration. Offensive realists believe that state functions in international system in accordance of their capacity and external surroundings. All these factors are given due consideration while formulating foreign policy and determining states' regional interest like Pakistan[20]. In this anarchical system for survival and enhancing its security mechanism United States is trying to maintain power balance in Asia to deter threats emanating from the non-state actors.

3.3.1 UU Pressure

The modern global system works on the so called liberal code of cooperation and mutual respect of sovereignty thus discourages the direct conflict among states. Though, with the development of sophisticated and destructive military weapons the chances of military conflicts for most of the states have increased. Keeping in mind the dynamics of international politics many of the scholars argue that the assumption of realism in the absence of law executing agency many states go to maximize their power, find relevance. In order to achieve their objectives, the stronger states now regardless of entering into direct military conflict act through their proxies[21]. Following the same tradition, the US pressurized Pakistan and left her with no option but to act as her proxy to further its objectives.

The threatening and uncompromising attitude of US President George W. Bush government after 9/11 incident and his address to the Congress in which he stated that the only choice a state can opt is that "*Either they are with us, or with the terrorists*"[22]. This statement has reflected the message and choice US President wanted the world to consider. Later, United Nations Security Council's Resolution in which UN urged the world to stand by US or they will face the consequences. All such incidents ended in the launching of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) on 7th October 2001, on Al-Qaida. These strikes by US in Afghanistan resulted in killing thousands of naive people in Afghanistan. People of Afghanistan fell victim to the land

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[20] Randall Schweller . Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Under Balancing, *International Security*, 29(2), (United States, Fall 2004).

[21] Loveman Chris, Assessing the Phenomenon of Proxy Intervention, *Conflict, Security & Development*, 2(3) (2002)

[22] War on Terror: Perspectives. *Newsweek*, (1 Oct. 2001)

and air strikes carried by US and its allies. US claimed that it will provide food to the innocent people of Afghanistan and that the intention of US to re-build and re-construct Afghanistan is clear but the US actions there raised questions over US's intention. Similarly, the only US intension which was visible and seemed clear was to target and hit the Al-Qaida organization in Afghanistan. Hence, US aggression and actions also left Pakistan with minimum choice of declining US offer and Pakistan decided to be ally of US in Global War against Terrorism.

3.3.2 Change Of Pakistan's Afghan Policy: Indian Factor

Soon after September 9/11 attacks on US, India offered unlimited and unrestricted cooperation to U.S. India by offering its military bases to US surprised the world however it never offered it to USSR during cold war though they considered as close allies at that time[23]. India also shared Afghanistan's satellite images with US before NATO and US attacked Afghanistan. Moreover, on diplomatic level, Indian Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee's visit to the U.S post 9/11 resulted in pleasing Indian government by using the term "natural ally" for them by the US senior official [24].

On 10th November, 2001 in United Nations General Assembly, US President Bush personally thanked Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee for their support and standing shoulder to shoulder in Global war against terrorism[25]. Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee showed their intention of defaming Pakistan by calling them the victim of terrorism and that they are determined to eradicate Al-Qaida from Afghanistan. India offered its land, air space and intelligence [26] to US and prepared a ground for defaming Pakistan on international level by declaring it a terrorist state. Hence, Pakistan was left with the only wise and practical way to counter the existing situation by accepting the US demand and provide all possible assistance in the Global war against terrorism. India would have benefitted a lot and could further implement their plans of defaming Pakistan in international community if, Pakistan refused to coordinate with US post 9/11.

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[23] Tellis J. Ashley. Eggers, Jeff. *U.S. Policy in Afghanistan: Changing Strategies, Preserving Gains*. (Carnegie Endowment.org. May 22, 2017) http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/22/u.s.-policy-in-afghanistan- changing-strategies-preserving-gains-pub-70027.

[24] Ninan Koshy N., *The Natural Ally and the Tachtical Ally*. Foreign Policy in Focus, (Institute for Policy Studies, November 1, 2001). https://ips-dc.org/the_natural_ally_and_the_tactical_ally/

[25] Vajpayee, Bush meet over terrorism war. Leaders discuss need to help rebuild Afghanistan. CNN.com.world, November 9, 2001, http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/asiapcf/south/11/09/india.vajpayee/index.html

[26] Najish A. Afroz, Before and After 9/11: Indo-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation, *Journal of International and Global Studies*, 9(2), (2017): 128-139.

3.3.3 Fragile Pakistan's Economy

Pakistan's policy makers thought that agreeing to participate in GWOT can end economic problems faced by Pakistan. President General Musharraf announced publically that one of the most important aspects his government is dealing and managing is economy of Pakistan and its revival is his government's top priority. President Musharraf further stated that economy is the priority for the state as the viable economy can guarantee the security of Pakistan. To strengthen the deteriorating economic situation of Pakistan, concentration over reducing fiscal deficit, widening tax base, reviving industries and improving trade balance needs to be done[27].

Pakistan initially was successful in removing sanctions it faced and also overcome international isolation. Pakistan again became US close ally. Resultantly, nuclear test related economic sanctions (economic sanctions imposed on Pakistan in 1998 as its nuclear tests) were removed on 22nd September and 27th October in 2001[28]. Pakistan was given US Dollar 600 million as Economic Support Fund (ESF) after removal of these sanctions as well as US Dollar 624.5 million as an assistance for developing purposes under ESF (Federal Ministry of Finance) (K.A.K, 2004 :14). Pakistan, faced serious security situation from terrorists' attack on its land after change in its 9/11 Afghan policy. Consequently, state of Pakistan decided to conduct operations against these terrorist elements in its tribal region. While conducting these operations Pakistan has spent and went through the economic loss far more than the money it got.

3.3.4 Counter Security Threat Perception

Pakistan longstanding Afghan Policy altered due to immense security threat perceptions both, internal and external. Decision makers of Pakistan termed it as a survival of nation. Similarly, President Musharraf stated in his address to nation on 19th September 2001 that top priority while designing policy for Pakistan is its defense. Moreover, Pakistan's nuclear assets are very precious for the survival of Pakistan. Pakistan's rationale behind joining GWOT was also the threat to the security and safety of nuclear assets of Pakistan from US. Though some of the nuclear expert criticized Pakistan's apprehensions and claimed them as undue. However, eminent nuclear experts refused to agree with this argument as they believed that this will create the perception

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[27] Mary A. Weaver, *Pakistan: In the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002):23

[28] Sav Explainer: U.S. Response to South Asia's 1998 Nuclear Tests. (Nuclear Issue. July 27, 2018). *SAV editorial staff. https://southasianvoices.org/sav-explainer-u-s-response-1998-nuclear-tests/*

of vulnerability of Pakistan's nuclear possessions. Furthermore, they believed that it will further open the doors for US media to assault Pakistan's nuclear assets and would apprehend that terrorist organizations would take over these nuclear assets. President Musharraf used this statement to gain support from his public in his decision of joining US war on terror[29].

Pakistan was considering India and Israel nexus very seriously and considered it very alarming for its nuclear assets. As stated by the eminent officer Brig (Rtd) Feroz Hassan Khan of Strategic Plans Division (SPD), that in 1986 the Pakistani intelligence found out Indian plans to hit Pakistan's nuclear assets at Kahuta in following Israel's attack at Osirak on the Iraqi nuclear plant. Later after two years India planned an operation named Brass- tacks. Through this plan India again contemplated to strike at Pakistan's nuclear assets. Kashmir crisis between Pakistan and India again gained momentum and they came close to the verge of war. US at that time sent a mission lead by Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates to ease the situation in the region[30].

If history of Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear capability is analyzed it shows that US have never favoured it. It was always a contention between US and Pakistan's relations[31].This gave a very solid ground to Pakistan's policy makers to be considerate regarding security and safety of Pakistan's nuclear assets. Meanwhile, western press was pointing towards Al-Qaida's plan to obtain Weapon of Mass Destruction through Pakistan[32]. Furthermore, US forces post 9/11 have produced some evidences supporting their claim of Al-Qaida's attainment of nuclear capability from Pakistan through people related to Pakistan's Nuclear Program[33]. This situation was extremely critical for Pakistan. US as a consequence to this sensitive situation offered nuclear safety assistance to Pakistan. As a result, two kinds of thoughts arose in Pakistan. One thought was that, the assistance of international community to Pakistan in enhancing security to its nuclear program would help strengthening its security and safety apparatus and also to the non-proliferation system. Furthermore, post 9/11 both US and Pakistan has

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[29] Shabana Fayyaz. *Regional Extremism and Militancy in South Asia*. Paper presented at international seminar organized by Pakistan Institute of Regional Studies in collaboration with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Islamabad, 0ct, 2008)

[30] H.F. Khan. *The United States, Pakistan and the War on Terrorism: Enduring Allies or Uncertain Partners? Global Terrorism: Genesis, Implications, Remedial and Countermeasures*". (Islamabad: Institute of Regional Studies, 2006)

[31] Ibid:357-382

[32] Julian Borger, Al-Qaida Videos Show Poison Gas Tests, *The Guardian*, 20 August 2002

[33] Simpson J. and Littlewood J., *A Framework for Assessing UK Responses to CBRN Terrorism.* British International Studies Association 28th Annual Conference. *(*UK: The University of Birmingham. 17 December 2003):3

cooperated immensely in the field of nuclear security and safety and US assistance in the shape of training and equipment[34]. Moreover, US perceive that Pakistan had also traded nuclear technology in exchange of missile technology to North Korea[35].

Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan's name was exposed by US as a dishonest person who has the potential of assisting in providing nuclear capability to Al-Qaida[36]. Later, President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf pardoned Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan. General Musharraf for justifying his decision stated that, Pakistan's nuclear and missile programs will never be rolled back. The underworld must be checked by the world community and Pakistan should not be targeted for having links with it as underworld is stronger in other Asian countries, Europe and many other countries, which actually rely on underworld for their developmental projects. Dr. A. Q. Khan a hero of the country is pardoned due to the mistakes committed by him[37]. General Musharraf claimed that any act committed by Dr. Abdul Qadeer, was his personal act and state of Pakistan has nothing to do with it, but credibility of Pakistan's nuclear assets became questionable in front of international community. This situation was analyzed by an analyst Shireen Mizari,

> ***For the future, the countries like Pakistan will be dragged into the Weapons of Mass Destruction WMD issue. For Pakistan, the issue is critical because this pretext could be a means of trying to target Pakistan's nuclear programme that sits uneasily with the US. And since WMD remains one of the rationalizations for the US pre-emptive doctrine, the present framing of the WMD issue impacts and aggravates Pakistan's security concerns[38].***

On the other hand, nuclear command and its control worked as a part and parcel of National Military Command Structure whose task was to guide on conventional military operations. Later, National Command Authority (NCA) was established under Strategic Plans Division (SPD) in 2000 as a secretariat of SPD. Apart from dealing with the developmental and operational issues related to nuclear competence, SPD looked into exports

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[34] Z, Khan. Strengthened Export Controls: Pakistan's Export Control Experience, Current and Future Challenges and Options Safeguards against Illicit Transfers: Pakistan's Institutional Response. *International Conference Report*, (London: South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, 2006)

[35] Greg Bruno, Jayshree Bajoria, *U.S-Pakistan Military Cooperation*, (Council on Foreign Relations, June 26, 2008). https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-pakistan-military- cooperation

[36] *The News*, *The Nation*, *Dawn*, (19 January, 2004).

[37] President Musharraf (quoted in), *Pakistan Times* (6 February 6, 2004)

[38] Shireen Mizari, Current Situation & Trends of Terrorism in South Asia, *Strategic Studies*, XXIV(2), (Summer 2004)

over and above clearance certification from ministry of Commerce. Similarly, tough and rigid code of conduct is guaranteed to defend against any possible threat from external and internal non-state radical elements[39]. Moreover, Pakistan has always been trying to meet requirements under international Nuclear Non-Proliferation regime, that are, United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNHCR) 15400 which was issued on 28th April 2004.[40]

3.5 Blame Game

Post 9/11 the fatal insurgency in Afghanistan resulted in rising suspicion of Kabul government towards Pakistan. The most insecure and unsafe areas in Afghanistan were those areas which were bordering Baluchistan, KP and FATA of Pakistan. These areas of Afghanistan were claimed as extreme risk areas.[41] These areas of Pakistan have the highest illiteracy and poverty rate. The increased insurgency in Afghanistan resulted in blaming Pakistan by Afghanistan for not playing its role efficiently against terrorism.

Afghan Government kept blaming Pakistan for supporting Taliban and then these Taliban launch attacks in Afghanistan. Pakistan refused all the blames and charges; instead Pakistan blamed Afghanistan for spreading unrest and insecurity in Pakistan.[42]

Hamid Karzai kept condemning Pakistan for not doing enough against Taliban residing in its tribal belt. He also threatened Pakistan of tracking down Taliban into tribal belt of Pakistan and stated that the dilemma for Afghanistan is not Taliban its Pakistan, since Pakistan is supporting and harboring them.[43] Similarly, Karzai on 13th December 2006 again delivered a statement blaming Pakistan for supporting Taliban and further stated that terrorist activities carried by these Taliban in Afghanistan are for scaring and pressuring Afghanistan.[44]

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[39] Naeem Salik, *The Genesis of South Asian Nuclear Deterrence: Pakistan's Perspective*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009)

[40] Z, Khan. Strengthened Export Controls: Pakistan's Export Control Experience, Current and Future Challenges and Options Safeguards against Illicit Transfers: Pakistan's Institutional Response. *International Conference Report*, (London: South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, 2006):2

[41] *Johnson* H. Thomson and *M. Chris Mason*. No Sign until *the* Burst *of* Fire*: Understanding* the *Pakistan*-Afghanistan Frontier. *International Security*, 32(4), (Spring 2008)

[42] Seth G. Jones, The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad. *International Security*, 32(4), (Spring 2008)

[43] Tang A. *Pakistan Accused of Supporting Taliban*, (2006). Retrieved from http://www.afghannewscenter.com/news/2006/dec

[44] Imtiaz Gul, *The Unholy Nexus: Pak-Afghan Relations under the Taliban*, (Lahore: Vanguard, 2002)

Military Ruler of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf while rejecting all the accusations by Afghanistan said on 2nd Feburary2007, in a news conference that all these Taliban are nurtured in Afghanistan. Moreover, he also claimed that Pakistan's agencies and intelligence has no involvement in any type of insurgencies and terrorism in neighboring states. [45] Afghanistan kept accusing Pakistan and resultantly bitter relations developed between both the neighboring states, further giving rise to the environment of mistrust between them.

Hamid Karzai during an inauguration ceremony in Jalalabad, of Bacha Khan Complex expressed the way towards better relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan is only through reforms introduced by Pakistan in its Afghan Policy and stopping support of Taliban.[46] Afghanistan targeted Pakistan that Pakistan has banned the jihadi outfits but still no major achievement has been made and these Taliban are residing peacefully in Tribal belt of Pakistan. Pakistan, on the other hand blamed Afghanistan for letting its soil being used by India.

President Musharraf blamed Afghanistan by stating that Indian objectives there in Afghanistan are only to offend Pakistan which is very clear and evident. He also raised the point of opening of Indian consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad is only for creating problems for Pakistan[47].

Afghanistan kept accusing Pakistan for maintaining same strategy of backing insurgencies as it had during 1990's. Though Pakistan kept denying these accusations Afghan government firmly believed that Pakistan since Soviet war until now is supporting and backing such groups who creates insurgencies and unrest in Afghanistan.[48] These Afghan suspicions became stronger after the revival of Taliban in Afghanistan. A UN report on the security of Afghanistan in September 2006 reveled that revival of Taliban especially in Southern Afghanistan is due to the weak, corrupt and incompetent Afghan institutions. Report also claimed that Afghan government, its army and police failed in securing Afghan land, guard its people, providing necessary services to them and counter insurgencies on their land despite the fact that billions of Dollars have been spent on them.[49] Furthermore, the report stated that militants operating in Afghanistan were

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[45] F. Talib. Taliban Up Rises to Put Pakistan in Pressure. (*PIPS*, 2008). Retrieved from: http://san-pips.com/index.asp.

[46] *The News.* (April 16, 2007).

[47] Ahmed Rashid. *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.* (Penguin Publishing Group: New York, 2008)

[48] Mir Sherbaz Khetran, *Indian Interference in Balochistan: Analysing theEvidence and Implications for Pakistan*, (Islamabad: Institute of Strategic Students, 2017)

[49] UN Report, (2006:3)https://www.un.org/zh/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDGReport2006.pdf

trained in Afghanistan. These Afghan militants were not motivated by ideology, its only their low social status, poverty and being deprived of basic needs that compelled them to involve themselves in such activities. Afghan government failed in satisfying needs of its people and remained incompetent which compelled its citizens to find other means of earning. A survey conducted by an Asian Foundation in Afghanistan in 2004 and then in 2006 also disclosed that the people of Afghanistan are dissatisfied by its people.[50]

Moreover, a state where Government writ is weak is very easily manipulated by various sections. Afghan's weak administration could not have managed violence smugglers and drug dealers etc. kept taking advantage of situation and served their interests well in Afghanistan. Interests of different sections converged, insurgents protected smugglers, drug convoys, traffickers and in return were benefited financially by them. All these sections of society could easily fulfill their interest as the government was incompetent to stop and get hold of them. In 2006 Hilmand province of Afghanistan proved to be the worst example of violence.[51]

Afghan President Hamid Karzai established his Republican party named *Hizb-e-Jamhuri Khwahan* after Burhanudin Rabbani formed a new version of Northern Alliance[52] named United National Front (UNF). Rationale behind formation of Republican Party was that Karzai felt threatened from UNF and wanted to oppose it. Such political insecurity became a much bigger issue then revival of Taliban, Al-Qaida and insurgency. Furthermore, in such weak political scenario regional and neighboring states also play their role in serving their interests. Likewise, role played by Iran, India, Pakistan, Russia and China to serve their interest in Afghanistan could not be ruled out. India wanted to grow its influence in Afghanistan to upset Pakistan easily. Pakistan was concerned about Indian involvement and consulates in Afghanistan. Russia and central Asian states had their own concerns and interests. Therefore, blaming Pakistan only is not the solution to the problems Afghanistan faced post 9/11. It has to tighten its administration and then tackle with all the elements causing disturbance in Afghanistan.

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[50] Seth G. Jones, The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad, *International Security*, 32(4), (Spring 2008)

[51] International Crisis Group, *Asia Report*, no. 68. (Dec., 2003): 45

[52] Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance.* (Congressional Research Service 7-5700 . RS21922. November 30, 2012). www.crs.gov

Conclusion

Pakistan's shift in Post 9/11 Afghan policy is a tactical move as to resolve uncertain economic condition, international isolation, nuclear and other security problems which it faced in pre 9/11 era. This changed Afghan policy considered factors which were very similar to the previous Afghan policy where Pakistan was particularly concerned about security and strategic issues like, Kashmir issue, US pressure, nuclear security and Indian influence over Afghanistan. Countering security and strategic issues emanating from its Afghan policy required Pakistan to use its military, political and an institutional instrument. The geography of Pakistan has created such a scenario for Pakistan that its Afghan policy does not only depend on Pakistan and Afghanistan's relations but regional, international powers and their interests also design them. As the defensive realists truly argue that the anarchic states struggle for power for their survival and in this competition the weaker states are left with no option but to balance their position in global politics rather to increase their relative power. In the similar fashion Pakistan to counter the threats emanating from its eastern border and US threats, joined hands with the US. Therefore, it is pertinent to mention that this new Afghan policy put Pakistan into a much grave situation as domestic and external security dynamics got disturbed.

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ANALYZING THE STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC PROSPECTS OF CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

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Abstract

CPEC is a mega investment project, termed as a key to rapid economic growth of Pakistan. It is an economic corridor providing connectivity to China, building around which Pakistan is believed to harness economic dividends as time passes. The project has great strategic significance and it contains enormous economic prospects, thus is vital for both the countries. Though, CPEC is not completed yet, it has already started contributing to Pakistan's economy as investment in energy projects has increased electricity supplies. CPEC has attracting private sector investment in to Pakistan, which as per official estimates, is expected to boost economic growth rate to 5.5 percent in the near future. While CPEC is a game changer for the development, government needs to pay attention to develop human capital (health, education, trainings and skills) and infrastructure (western route) in order to develop lagging regions and to improve the living standard of people living there.

Keywords: CPEC, debt sustainability, strategic importance, connectivity, economic gains

1. Introduction

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the most important project in the history of Pakistan. The CPEC corridor connects Gwadar Port (in Balochistan) to the land-locked region of Xinjiang in north-west of China. The corridor contains 3,000 km long highways, railway lines and pipelines to provide shorter route for oil and gas transportation into China. The importance of CPEC is undeniable owing to the fact that it will benefit both China and Pakistan through improving connectivity. Chinese Premier

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proposed CPEC in May 2013, but the ideas for a corridor (connecting China to Pakistan's deep seaports) goes back as far as to 1959 when the two countries agreed to build the Karakoram highway. In 2002, the CPEC project started to emerge when China initiated[1] construction works at Gwadar port during the military regime in Pakistan. After a detailed homework, it was 2015 (April) when the two countries formally signed the agreement worth $46 billion (which later extended to $62 billion). The agreement consisted of the short, medium and long run initiatives, with a handsome fast-tracked "Early Harvest" projects[2] (worth $35 billion, approximately), which were bound to complete by the end of 2018.

After initial agreement, the project kept on expanding. In December 2015, China agreed to invest additional $1.5 billion to establish an information and technology park. In addition to huge investment from the Chinese government, CPEC also facilitated economic connectivity between the two countries. The Exim Bank of China agreed to provide concessional[3] loan (nearly $11 billion at interest rate of 1.6%) to Pakistan to revamp Pakistan's transportation infrastructure.

According to the ADB, CPEC will provide linkages between economic hubs on urban landscapes, a place of businesses and economic resources. These economic hubs can be linked with the supply and demand markets. CPEC will thus perform a critical role in regional integration of China, Iran, and Afghanistan. The economic corridor's central importance is reflected by the fact that China incorporated this project in its 13thFive Year Development Plan; a very important document for China defining its growth path. CPEC has been the biggest overseas investment so far by China with an ideal operational time of three years (road connectivity). The volume, speed and scope of the project explains its potential as a strategic game changer in the region. It is anticipated that this volume of investment and connectivity will stage Pakistan as economic hub in the region. In this context, this paper examines the economic and strategic prospects of CPEC.

The paper is structured as follows: The next section provides a critical review strategic significance of CPEC to both the countries. Section 3 discusses provincial and federal governments' differences over the route. Section 4 examines CPEC's impact on Pakistan's economic growth. Section 4 also touches upon the human development and social sector. Section 5

[1] "Backgrounder: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor". *China Daily.* (22 April 2015). https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015xivisitpse/2015-04/22/content_20503693.htm

[2] "Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms". www.*pc.gov.pk (Press release);* "Pakistan lands $46 billion investment from China". *CNN Money.* (20 Apr 2015)

[3] **"**Pak-China 'Technology Park' on anvil". *The Express Tribune*, (2nd December, 2015). http://tribune.com.pk/story/1002185/pak-china-technology-park-on-anvil/

examines economic return to China. The final section draws main conclusions and gives policy recommendations.

2. CPEC Project Financing

US showed resentment to CPEC and has continuously questioned its financial and debt sustainability, therefore, this phenomenon is important to investigate. Pakistan and China signed CPEC agreement in 2015 to start work on projects worth USD 46 billion. Later on, CPEC project financing increased to USD 57.2 billion, with USD 35.3 billion committed as foreign direct investment (FDI) in the energy sector by private Chinese investment companies. Moreover, USD 12.8 billion was committed to investments in public infrastructure projects financed through commercial or government-to-government loans from Chinese entities (see Table 1). Loans taken by Chinese companies are mainly from the China Development Bank and China Exim Bank, against their own balance sheets. The debt would be serviced from their own earnings without any obligation on the part of the Government of Pakistan.

Table 1: CPEC Project Financing (USD Billion)

Avenue of Investment	USD billion
Foreign Director Investment in Energy sector	35.3
Public investments financed through commercial or government-to-government loans from Chinese entities for infrastructure projects	12.8
Public investments financed by Chinese grants	0.4
Public investments financed by non-Chinese foreign loans	0.5
Public investments financed through the GoP's own resources (revenue or domestic debt)	8.2

Source: Planning Commission, Islamabad

Notably, out of the USD 57.2 billion CPEC portfolio, USD 35.3 billion is committed as FDI by Chinese investment companies, which would not create a liability on the Government of Pakistan. USD 8.2 billion is GoP public investments financed through its own resources either through revenue or domestic debt. The USD 12.8 billion government-to-government loans from Chinese entities for infrastructure projects are considered to be concessional, with 2 percent interest to be repaid over a period of 20 to 25 years. In this scenario, additional burden on external accounts is not likely

to result in an unsustainable debt situation. However, revenue from Gwadar port and toll collection is expected to counter balance the additional debt liability generated by CPEC on future balance of payments.

3. Strategic Significance

CPEC has strategic importance in the region since it will develop several trade routes from China to the Central Asia, Middle East and Africa. Over the past decades, China has emerged as a major oil importer due to rising domestic consumption and to fulfill world's growing demand for its products. Therefore, in order to ensure continued production, energy security is critical for the Chinese government. In addition, Western China lies far inwards than its sea ports therefore CPEC will open trade routes, providing it a direct access to the world. This route not only provides China a secure corridor for its oil imports but also provides a shorter route to the oil-rich Middle East and populous Africa (a huge market for consumables). Through Gwadar Port, China can now bypass the lengthier logistical route that it currently opts for via the Strait of Malacca near Singapore in Southeast Asia, which is prone to risks from western and regional powers.

In order to ensure energy security, China has plans to build a refinery and oil storage facilities at Gwadar Port, which would bring even more investment to Pakistan. Moreover, the road network and pipelines will be built to transport oil to its regions in China. This huge investment will allow uninterrupted supply of energy to China, mitigating the risks attached to the current route, which the U.S. (or its allies) or India can block in case of rising of hostilities in the region. Hence, CPEC has vital strategic significance for China while serving even more to Pakistani economy provided that we harness the opportunities well. CPEC will also pave the path of development in western regions of China, where tensions remain due to radical separatists. In the recent developments, Iran has also shown their desire to participate in CPEC and to extend the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline to China. Hence, due to the CPEC significant importance for development of China, the Chinese government has not only offered to invest in the resource starved road infrastructure of Pakistan but has also made Pakistan a key partner in development.

4. Provincial and federal governments' differences on route

In order to benefit from the emerging opportunities and prove ourselves up to the task, Pakistan needs to deal with the project passionately but at the same time with caution. For this to achieve, are the stakeholders in the country are required to put in coordinated efforts with dedication. However, there happened to be serious initial differences between the federal and provincial governments on routes of CPEC. Initially the provincial governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan had expressed serious concerns over the western route of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) criticizing the federal government that it will only benefit Punjab at the cost of other provinces. The route controversy increased because of initial silence and subsequent contradictory statements by the federal government.

This issue was later resolved amicably by making agreement on three different routes, connecting different parts in all regions of Pakistan. Resultantly, the CPEC route will now connect all the autonomous regions (AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan) and provinces of Pakistan **(See Figure 1)**. Importantly, this arrangement is now seen to serve a greater purpose by posing as a driver for regional connectivity between South and East Asia. The following three routes are the proposed routes for CPEC:

- The **Central Route:** This route will go from *Gwadar to-Turbat-Panjgur-Khuzdar2-Ratodero-Kashmore-Rajanpur-Dera Ghazi Khan-Dera Ismail Khan-Bannu-Kohat-Peshawar-Hasanabdal-and onwards.*

- **Eastern Route:** This route will also pass through from cities in Punjab starting from *Gwadar to Turbat-Panjgur-Khuzdar-Ratodero-Kashmore-Rajanpur-Dera Ghazi Khan-Multan-Faisalabad-PindiBhatian-Rawalpindi-Hasanabdal and onwards*.

- **Western Route:** Finally Western route pass through most of Balochistan and KP via *Gwadar-Turbat-Panjgur-Khuzdar-Kalat-Quetta-Zhob-Dera Ismail Khan-Bannu-Kohat-Peshawar-Hasanabdal-and onwards.*

While government has been paying attention to resolve these differences, some structural factors are noteworthy. These factors are important for taking a final decision about the route. Firstly, in the case of the western route, the most serious challenge is militancy but is less susceptible to natural calamities. Secondly, while the eastern route faces natural calamities (such as massive floods in the monsoon), the western route (that passes through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan) lacks in supply of labor and urban economic hubs to provide the needed support to a trade corridor. Hence, these factors need attention while making further plans for each route.

Figure 1: Three Proposed Routes of CPEC

5. Impact on Economic Growth

In 2015, the country was facing energy shortages of over 5,000 MW with power load shedding up to 8-12 hours per day. The economic losses from power load shedding were estimated to be at 2.5% of Pakistan's GDP. Power generation was therefore a major focus while CPEC projects were taking shape, with over $30 billion invested in energy projects. About 10,400 MW of electricity was aimed at generating by 2018, which were to ease the energy crisis of Pakistan. Individual projects were though financed with private loan from the Chinese Exim Bank at lower interest rates (5-6%). The projects were installed under the power policy where our Government is legally bound to purchase electricity from power producers at pre-negotiated rates.

CPEC is considered to be economically vital for Pakistan because it has great economic prospects for driving higher economic growth in the country. Moody's, an international rating agency, termed the CPEC project as "*credit positive*" for Pakistan. However, a number of the project's key paybacks have to be materialized after 2018. It is expected that CPEC projects will be bringing billions of USD in investment, thus will have positive impact on the balance of payment of Pakistan, reducing country's dependence on foreign donors. This investment will obviously have significant positive effect for Pakistan's economic growth. There are two types of effects of Chinese investment a) direct and b) indirect.

Table 1: GDP Growth Rate and Social Sector Spending, 2013-2018

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
		(%)			
GDP Growth	4.1	4.1	4.6	5.2	5.5
			Rs in million		
Education	537,598	599,047	663,356	699,222	829,152
Health	201,986	231,172	267,953	328,962	416,467
			As % of GDP		
Education	2.14	2.18	2.28	2.19	2.40
Health	0.80	0.84	0.92	1.03	1.20

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 2018-19

Through direct effects, Chinese investments has increased GDP growth rate from 4.1% to 5.5% between 2013 and 2018 (see **Table 1**)[4] which was slowed down to around 3% during 2009 to 2014 due to the energy shortages. This is because of the given local component of the investment of about US$18 billion, with the assumption of higher local investments (50% to 80%) in Rail, Road, Hydel and Gwadar Port and a lower component of investment (20%) for coal based power plants. This has increased 1.4 percentage points GDP growth rate during FY16-18 raising GDP growth rate.

Indirect effects are much greater. While bulk of the investment was utilized for setting up more than15,000 MW coal based power plants, equivalent to 74% of existing capacity in 2015, the increased electricity supplies have boosted private sector's activities and investment. Consequently, the ratio of private investment to GDP, that on average was on decline (to 9.6% during the FY2009-14), increased to 10.3% during the FY15-18. Similarly private sector credit to GDP that was fallen to 12.6% increased to 18.8% in 2018 showing that CPEC investment has provided the much needed impetus to economic growth by stimulating private investment in the country. CPEC has already increased the country's growth potential in medium term. CPEC investment supplemented annual investment to GDP. As a result, total investment to GDP ratio increased from 14.6% in 2014 to 16.7% in 2018. Consequently, Pakistan's GDP growth rate increased to 5.5% in 2018 from 4.1% in 2014.

[4] Pakistan Economic Survey. Islamabad: Economic Advisor's Wing, (Ministry of Finance, 2018-19)

Chinese investment in infrastructure coupled with its positive effects on growth has great prospects for human development and poverty reduction. Evidence shows that a higher growth trajectory of 6% per annum resulted[5] in poverty reduction in Pakistan during the 1980s and 2000s. it is obvious that the impact of global financial crisis (GFC) on Pakistan has mainly transmitted through Gulf Financial Crisis due to Pakistan's over dependence on Gulf region[6]. Thus, Chinese investment now, in the form of CPEC, has potential for poverty reduction through its impact on economic growth.

Investment in human capital is essential to reap the benefit of market integration through economic corridor. In Pakistan, investment in human capital remained at 2.1% of GDP in education and 0.8% of GDP in health; in fiscal year, 2013-14 (see **Table 1**). Chinese investment in infrastructure should have helped the government to increase investment in human capital to 3% of GDP in education and 2% of GDP in health sector in order to be comparable with the peer neighboring countries. The would have been possible by switching public sector spending from low priority areas such as metro bus, orange line and other politically oriented schemes towards human development in order to realize the full benefit of the integration of markets and the globalization process. However, investment in human capital increased to 2.4% of GDP in education and 1.2% of GDP in health in fiscal year 2017-18.

6. Economic Returns to China

The existing trade route covers the distance of 13000 km, taking 45 days to reach the Persian Gulf from China. On the contrary, the CPEC trade corridor will reduce the distance to 2,500 km where freight will take only 10 days to reach destination, resulting in huge savings for China. In addition, the private investments (majority by Chinese public enterprises) made though CPEC would yield attractive long-term returns, which at the same time serves a big purpose for Pakistan as well being a resource and investment starved developing country. Such investments will bring much better return to China than the US treasury instruments (yielding 1-2% per annum) where China has been parking bulk of its foreign exchange out a total US$4 trillion.

Further, the projects would benefit the Chinese firms over the long term as the machinery, equipment and aftersales service/maintenance used in the projects/industry is procured from China. In addition, in the short run majority of the projects setup under CPEC would also employ a significant number of Chinese workers. The Gwardar-Xianjiang route will provide a

[5] Talat Anwar, "Role of Growth and Inequality in Explaining Changes in Poverty in Pakistan", *The Pakistan Development Review*, 49(1), (2010): 1-17

[6] Sajid Amin Javed, Badiea Shaukat & Iftikhar Ahmad, "How the Global and Gulf Financial Crises Affected Pakistan: Ten Year Review", *International Migration* (2020)

secure and economical access to the raw material supplies and exports over the long term. Similarly, China is Pakistan's one of the major trading partner. In 2015, the two-sided trade exceeded $16 billion. In the recent years, Pakistan's exports to China augmented from US$ 0.4 billion in 2004-05 to US$ 1.7 billion in 2015-16. On the contrary, imports from China grew heavily and increased from US$ 1.8 billion to US$ 16 billion during this period. The bilateral trade balance remains tilted towards China and being a net exporter the trade balance remained heavily in favor of China. Now, CPEC will open up even more avenues for trade and cooperation and China is expected to gain more being a developed country.

CPEC can result in a doubling of trade with China along with transfer of technology benefiting both countries. Pakistan can reduce its trade deficit by exploring more avenues in China, which is a big market of one billion plus consumers. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will serve as catalyst in this regard. There is a need to provide incentive to country's private sector through promoting Business-to-Business contacts and facilitating joint ventures. This will help the domestic firms to modernize, benefit from Chinese research and development, train internal human capital, obtain international certifications, and oblige quality standards in accordance with consumers' demand. In addition, in the backdrop of continued restructuring in Chinese economy, Pakistan's private sector can also benefit from Priority Special Economic Zones under CPEC, which are there to facilitate relocation of labor-intensive industries[7].

7. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

CPEC has great strategic and economic importance for Pakistan and China since it will facilitate several regional corridors and trade routes from China to Central Asia, Middle East and Africa. CPEC will open trade routes and deliver China a direct access to populous Africa and the oil-rich Middle East region through the Gwadar Port avoiding the lengthier route it currently uses.

Out of the US$ 57.2 billion CPEC project financing, US$ 35.3 billion is committed as FDI by Chinese investment companies, whereas the remaining amount is concessional loan to be paid over 20-25 period, which is not likely to create an unsustainable debt burden on Pakistan. CPEC has great economic and social prospects and is vital for both the countries, as benefits will accrue to both. The project will allow Gwadar to strive with Persian Gulf ports benefiting the province as well as the country. It will allow goods

[7] Iftikhar Ahmad & Zhou Taidong, "Special Economic Zones in Pakistan: Promises and Perils", *PIDE Research Report* (2020)

and energy to move from and into China through a shorter and secure land route resulting in huge saving for China and generating billions of dollars for the region.

Concurrently, CPEC offers great opportunities for Pakistan's economy. Huge investments in energy projects has increased electricity supplies attracting private sector investment in the country and stimulated economic growth rate to 5.5 percent per annum in 2018. The project can also result in an increasing trade with China, along with transfer of technology benefiting both countries. CPEC also provide great opportunity for exploring possibilities for collaborative research projects between Chinese and Pakistani Universities.

While CPEC has emerged as a game changer for the development, government needs to pay a attention to develop western route in order to develop remote and under develop regions which will have a profound impact on the living standard of people who are left behind. It will also eliminate provincial differences as lack of consensus among the smaller provinces over CPEC schemes may lead to fragmentation of the country. Last, but not the least, Pakistan needs to pay proper attention and allocate adequate resources for human development to cater with future needs in wake of post-CPEC scenario.

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